
THE LARSEN LEGACY

VOLUME 7: 2001-2003

COLLEGE, AND BABIES, AND MOVING...OH MY!



Preface

Larsen Legacy: Volume 7 covers a momentous time in our nation's history. On September 11, 2001 a terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York City killed thousands and left a nation in mourning. Our family joined the national dialogue in extending condolences to the grieving families as well as offering prayers on behalf of our great nation. Against this backdrop of events, our family's activities, though less momentous, nevertheless are noteworthy. They included college degrees earned, missions completed, jobs secured, babies born, and even a marriage, joyfully celebrated.

Along with these events, these years brought a migration unparalleled in our family's history. The Bennions left California for Cache Valley, Utah; the Andersons left Iowa for St. Louis, Missouri, Dave and Andrea moved from Tucson, Arizona to Boise, Idaho, and the Seelys moved within the boundaries of Idaho Falls three times. At that same time John and Laurel left Provo and moved to Canton, Michigan and Mike left his beloved BYU for dental school in Iowa City, Iowa. Paul and Jenny moved from Provo to Madison, Wisconsin for graduate studies and Tim, newly released as a missionary, settled into his apartment in Rexburg, Idaho to attend BYU-I.

And while all of this frenetic activity was swirling around us, Daddy and I wrote our weekly letters, highlighting family news and offering encouragement and inspiration for the inevitable difficult days. These weekly missives are compiled here for you so that you might take an occasional glance back at where we have come from, and what we have gone through to arrive at our present place. Hopefully they will add some humor and color to your day and serve to remind you, also, that in the midst of all the madness, the Lord's hand was guiding, protecting, and strengthening us all. Lovingly, Mom

Dedication

To my children and their hard-working spouses, who paid the price to achieve their educational and family goals, all the while drawing strength from family relationships and their trust in a merciful Heavenly Father.

Acknowledgements

To my busy bunch of kids (and their capable spouses), who went through photo albums and digital files to provide me with the photos to complement this volume;

To Steve, whose weekly lunch dates provided the help I've needed with computer problems;

To granddaughter, Chrissy, for her expertise with Canva and her help downloading files;

To my son, John, whose dealings with Lulu span a decade and who willingly gave of his time to help with formatting, cover designs, and other publishing issues; for his calm demeanor and problem-solving abilities that calmed me down when I was in near panic mode.

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College, and Babies, and Moving...Oh My!

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2001

January 3, 2001

[Dad] We are having a great new year and enjoying good health. With New Year's Eve on Sunday night our celebrations were altered. To begin with, I chaperoned the bi-stake youth dance at the West Stake Center on Saturday night. I refused entrance to a young man who showed up in denims and no tie, asked a boy to remove his earring because it was against the standards on our dance cards, and ask a couple who were being excessively affectionate to cool it. Other than that, it was a pretty good dance with lots of pizza, vegetables, and fruit for refreshments.

We had good meetings on Sunday and were spiritually fed by the talks of the Crites family. They are going to be moving in the near future because he has changed jobs and is working for a company in Provo. Since it was a fifth Sunday, we had a combined meeting. Jim and Jan Wheeler talked about the new Marriage and Family Relations course available in Sunday School. We came away from the experience feeling pretty good about the things we are doing to strengthen our relationships. Sunday night we watched "Legacy" which we received from Karen for Christmas. After that we watched the video of "Special Witnesses" and reveled in the testimonies of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles!! What a great way to start a new year!

Monday morning we got the New Year off to a great start with stripping the wallpaper in the entry way. I can't believe how different it looks! It was quite a job and there is still a lot of work to do to finish washing off the remaining glue and prepare the walls for painting. Sue and I struggle so with these decorating decisions and wish we had some family closer who are so gifted in this.

[Mom] The big news of the past week was the wonderful opportunity to get together with so many of the family. It was especially sweet to have Dave and Andrea and family here with us for a few days. It has been a long time since we've had them home for the holidays. John and Laurel spent most of the week with us; this will be the last time we will have them here for a long time. It is always fun to have Becky and Chet a part of things and we also enjoyed having Chet's mom here on Christmas evening.

The biggest challenge for me with these holiday get-togethers is trying to keep my wits about me with all the people and activity going on. I learned something that has helped me immensely: go to bed at night! It used to be that as long as there was one person still up, I would stay up, too, but inevitably I would be sick before the visit was over because of too many late nights. Now I just excuse myself and go to bed and let the younger, more vibrant generation keep partying. More than one night the kids stayed up way past midnight laughing and talking until the wee hours. Of course, Mike and Paul are accustomed to those kinds of hours anyway, so they thrive on it.

On Thursday I called Gene Adams about some Sunday School business and he commented that when he drove past our house on his way to check on his cows, that it looked like we were running a bed and breakfast establishment. Later I counted the vehicles outside and realized that we had a minivan (Dave and Andrea) two white cars (John and ours) Chet and Becky's two vehicles, Mike's blue Hyundai, and Jenny's VW. That number was small in comparison to the numbers we were feeding and bedding down each night! It's times like this that I'm grateful for our spacious basement and large kitchen\dining area.

I just returned from taking Mike to Blackfoot to catch his ride back to Provo. He is anxious to get back and start looking for work and secure books for winter semester. His Hyundai is sitting on Ron Mangum's car lot as of a few hours ago. He got it all cleaned up and ready to sell. He's hoping to get enough out of it that he can get into a newer model that will take him through his dental school years. He felt like until he knew exactly what he had coming in for this next semester that he would rather go car-less than get into a bind. It's hard to believe that he will be graduating in April. He was also anxious to get back to Provo and get his mail and see if he has heard from any dental schools. He has a lot going on right now and a lot of uncertainty and I know he would appreciate your faith and prayers. Shauntel suggested that we fast this Sunday on behalf of Mike, that he might be able to secure a spot in a dental program. I talked it through with Mike and he agreed.

Paul spent three days with Jenny in Bountiful last weekend arriving home late Monday night. She suggested that he bring her car home and then pick her up enroute to Provo this weekend so that is what he did. He worked a 12 hour shift last night at Basic American and will be working

tonight and Thursday night, too. These 7 pm to 7am are killer shifts, but he is grateful for the extra money to help carry him through the semester.

He and Jenny seem to be very compatible with each other. We certainly think she is a lovely young woman and we would be delighted if this moved towards a spring wedding. Her maternal grandfather is a sealer in the Bountiful temple but at the present time he and his wife are on a mission so there is a chance that Grandpa Larsen could perform the wedding even if it was in Utah. Paul and Jenny have talked about location and timing since she is presently trying to decide about employment following her graduation in April. She has offers in Portland, New York, and Salt Lake. Although she prefers the one in New York, if this romance blossoms, she and Paul don't know how that would work. One interesting sideline of this is that there is a graduate program in the area Paul is interested in (Nanotechnology) that is offered at Cornell, which just happens to be in the town Jenny's job offer is in. When Corning heard that Jenny might not accept their offer because of a romantic interest, they offered an internship to her boyfriend as a part of the package. That sounds great except that come September Paul needs to be in Provo and Jenny would be in New York. These kinds of things drive me nuts. But it's their call and I'm grateful that I can just sit back and let it happen.

Daddy mentioned we stripped the wallpaper off the entryway. That is my project for the next couple of weeks. My main focus this week is completing the annual ward history for submission the 15th. Yesterday I called almost every active ward member to get information finalized. For the year 2000 I kept notes of every Sunday's ward business such as blessings, ordinations, awards, releases and sustainings and it has made this process much easier.

January 8, 2001

[Dad] I had my annual review with Kim (my boss) and still have a job for another year. On Thursday night, I had a presentation to make at the Portneuf District Recognition Dinner. I had been working on it for quite some time and had difficulties with the Power Point presentation because of the slides I had imported from 4 or 5 other presentations. Mike helped me a lot on Wednesday before he left to go back to Provo. I could never have done it without his help. But, the night of the presentation, the computer gave me

some problems and things didn't go as smoothly as I would have liked.

Friday night we went to Idaho Falls and had dinner with Becky and her family and then went to an Eagle Court of Honor at the Holy Rosary Catholic Church for Adam Clinton, one of my Island Park staffers. It was good to be there representing the council and to rub shoulders with some great Scouters that have served in Troop 310 for a lot of years. It was also good to participate in an ecumenical event like that and recognize the good that Scouting can do with fostering relationships across church boundaries.

So far this year I am keeping my resolutions and feeling better about my spiritual and physical self. I lost a little ground during the Christmas holidays with all the good food and sweets around, but I am back on track and have lost the pounds I had gained.

Last night we had a social for the Stake YM, YW, and our spouses, along with our Priesthood advisors—Pres. Layne VanOrden, Dwight Gardner, and Clark Wray. We had a great meal and a good visit. We also honored Damon Orr, who is leaving the YM for service in his ward Eider's quorum after serving for almost six years in the Stake YM with three different presidents.

We are thankful and excited for Mike's acceptance to Creighton and the IDEP program. That means that his first year of studies will be at ISU and the out-of-state tuition will be waived.

[Mom] This morning was our first Sunday on the later schedule. I had pretty much gotten my lesson prepared during the week so I had time this morning to read everything again. I told Daddy a couple weeks ago that I wasn't looking forward to teaching the D&C since it has always been my least favorite scripture. But, this past week as I have studied for my lesson, I have loved the things I've learned and am looking forward to this opportunity to teach it.

Our prayers today have been with David and Andrea to be able to sell their home in Arizona and to find a home in Boise valley. It's such a major thing to sell a home and buy another and complicated by Andrea's pregnancy and her responsibilities with three small children. She said that she spent all day Wednesday with a realtor, in and out of houses, and by the time she got home she was exhausted. Then she imagined doing it with a new-born as well, and she knew that these next few weeks are critical. My heart goes out to

them. Some of the most trying memories I have are of experiences we had while moving. I know they would appreciate your faith and prayers.

We were thrilled with Mike's acceptance into Creighton. It relieves a lot of stress and uncertainty for the next few months. The house is quiet again, much to SaraKay's dismay.

The holidays are wonderful, but it is also exciting to face a new year and take time to analyze what projects and goals need working on. Daddy and I are hoping to redecorate the entry as well as get the family room downstairs done. I used the last bottle of string beans last week from my storage and I know that this year needs to be a gardening year. It's going to be wonderful to have Daddy around for a summer.

No news from Tim this past week, but his Christmas call was upbeat and encouraging. Today while I was stirring the gravy before we sat down to eat a roast beef dinner, SaraKay commented, "I bet Tim would like to be here eating this good meal with us." I assured her that he would probably love a nice roast beef dinner and that a mission involved many sacrifices of every kind, but that I felt confident that he knew he was where he wanted to be at this time in his life. Doesn't fasting help us appreciate things that may go unappreciated otherwise! Anyway, our prayers are forever with him, that he will be protected from harm and successful in finding those the Lord has prepared to hear the truth.

January 15, 2001

[Dad] Happy Martin Luther King Day! It is actually his birthday, 72 years ago. Ronald Reagan in his first inaugural speech said, "Act worthy of yourselves; you are too great a nation to limit yourselves to small dreams."

The big news of the week was SaraKay's winning the hoop shoot for girls age 10-11. It was fun to watch. We had gone over to the Church at 7:30 and shot for almost an hour and I was worried that she might be worn out. She really only had two other girls in her group of 10 that were any competition at all. I didn't have much opportunity to watch the other two groups of girls but it didn't look like they were doing very well. Sure enough; first, second, and third places all came from the same group. She hit four out of the five warmups and then shot 7 out of her first 10 shots. Then she hit 9 out of her last 15 for a total of 16 out of the 25 counters. Second place was 15 and third place was 14. I was proud of the way she kept her cool

under that extreme pressure and did her best. She was pleased to have another trophy to add to her collection—in fact she had already made a place for it on her dresser.

We had a great District Recognition Dinner that night and recognized many wonderful people in the Blackfoot District. I had a five-minute presentation on endowing Scouting and it went very well. Last week was a busy and fruitful week with my work and I am excited about some of the things that are happening and the ideas or "dreams" that I have for this year's endowment effort.

I wanted to close with some thoughts regarding our homes. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., suggested that "our homes are holy places and that we should approach them as if coming to an altar. Ask yourself what you have done to make your home an altar—a place that sanctifies or prepares those who are there for celestial living. Do your actions focus on developing loving relationships? Are there kindly acts of concern each day? Does your routine bring about maintenance of that home and practices of provident living? Do your pursuits bring about learning and refinement? Are the relationships within that home those that can be forever?" I pray that the answer to each of those questions is yes and that the activities within your home sanctify and prepare each of you for celestial living.

[Mom] Now that we are on the 11 o'clock schedule we thought that we would have choir before our block of meetings but Angie decided to go with the after-block schedule so it was after three when we arrived home. John said that they go to meetings at one p.m. and that Emma and James are having a rough time adjust. When I heard about their woes, I realized that we don't have much to complain about.

SaraKay was pleased with winning another trophy. She now advances to the next level. I had gone to Idaho Falls that morning for an early temple session and missed the competition, but when she arrived home with the trophy hidden under her coat, she was pretty excited. I told her that I knew her violin and piano practicing would pay dividends! She wondered what that had to do with hoop shooting and thought that I was joking, but I really wasn't. A lot of the skills involved in her music have come in handy in other things too, such as her ability to focus, her coordination, and her ability to keep her cool even in high pressure

situations. (Anyway, you know me. I never miss a chance to put in a plug for the piano!)

David and Andrea sold their house on Wednesday. Tuesday they received a call from their realtor with an offer. They talked and prayed about it Tuesday evening and came up with what they considered a fair counter offer. By early afternoon on Wednesday the other party had accepted and the deal was completed. What a relief! The realtor told them that there had been 70+ homes on the market in their area of Tucson this past year and that in the last six months only one had sold. It was a very depressed market and they truly felt fortunate to have that portion of their relocation process completed. The buyers take possession on February first so Hewlett-Packard will move their furnishings in the next couple of weeks and store them for them if they haven't located a place.

Grandma Richards has been struggling with stomach problems and had a stomach scope done last week that revealed problems that the doctor thought he could control with medication. After being on the medication for a couple of days, Grandma started vomiting and was sicker than before. She had an allergic reaction to it and once she quit taking it, she felt better. She is hopeful that she can control most of her condition with her diet and she was relieved that the tests didn't show any cancer. Grandma Gooch had stomach cancer and so it has been a worry.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are in Arizona right now taking care of business. The temple is closed for a couple of weeks and they left yesterday. They've had a busy time these last few weeks with all the holiday weddings and other family socials.

Last night on family chat we visited about all the things that have changed since I was a young mother raising a family. It was mentioned that we never used to have car seats for our babies and that many a time I would drive with a baby sitting on my lap, or crawling back and forth over the seats or playing on the floor while we rode along. I made the comment that my one experience with the "gift of tongues" happened during one such trip. At the prodding of Steph and John I promised to include the incident in today's letter.

Hence: During the summers when we were heavily involved in doing missionary work among the Mexicans, I frequently picked up investigators enroute to Sunday School and then delivered them home afterwards. Along with the Mexicans I had seven or eight of my own kids, Allan and Matt

Reid, and then whoever else needed a ride. In those days we owned a Beauville van (12-seater) and it had capacity for quite a bunch, especially since seatbelts weren't a necessity and the kids could crowd up or sit on someone's lap. The driver's seat was a bucket seat and there was a small space between the two front seats that provided passage for anyone coming and going during the ride. On this particular Sunday we had only one investigator with us and he was seated on the bench seat behind the two front bucket seats. Through an interpreter, before we left the stake center, he asked if I would consider taking him to Atomic City where he thought he might have a letter waiting for him from his family back in Mexico. It was a lot to ask but I agreed to do it, thinking that if I headed out the Arco highway and came back by way of Tabor it wouldn't take me too much longer than my regular trip.

Daddy was bishop at the time and I was pretty much on my own since he stayed after meetings for interviews and other business. The road between the stake center and the Arco highway was paved and straight for most of the way, except for an s curve in the road just prior to intersecting with the Arco Highway. I was driving with a baby sitting on my lap and steering with one hand. I was going about 45 mph and doing fine until I approached the curve. As I started into the curve, I realized that I needed two hands to steer but one hand was holding the baby and I couldn't manage the turn. The van left the road and hit a big bump as it plowed through sagebrush and rock. With the first bump, the baby and I both bounced right out of the seat onto the floor space between the front two bucket seats. The kids were all bouncing around and screaming, more from surprise than terror, and the van continued to move ahead.

I remember being on the floor of the van as it rumbled on and wondering what I should do. Just then the Mexican fellow yelled something to me and I knew what I should do. I reached up with my free hand and pushed on the brake pedal. The van came to a stop about two feet in front of a large stop sign and the highway intersection. It was truly a hair-raising experience for us all, especially the poor Mexican who I'm sure was wondering if he would live to ever see Mexican soil again.

Anyway, I climbed back up into the driver's seat, we checked everyone for injuries, and finding none but a few bumped heads, we continued on to our destination. It wasn't until a while later that

I realized that the Mexican fellow had yelled at me in Spanish and I had understood him in English, even though pushing on the brake was the farthest thing from my mind at the time. I was so rattled when I bounced off my seat and onto the floor that even when he told me to push on the brake, I remember looking at the two pedals (brake and gas) and wondering which was which. I knew then as I know now that the Lord was watching over us and helped me get out of what could have been a very bad situation. To this day I don't know how to say, "Brake" in Spanish. So, there you have it. My experience with the gift of tongues...less dramatic than the Day of Pentecost, but never-the-less, amazing.

January 22, 2001

[Mom] On Friday Mike got word that he had been accepted into Iowa's dental program. He was supposed to give Creighton an answer on Wednesday and had received permission for a two-day delay. He knew that Iowa's committee was meeting on Friday and was still hoping that he might be admitted. When he called the secretary that afternoon, she congratulated him on his acceptance. He had a couple of hours before he had to call IDEP with his decision and so he called me and we visited and then he called Dad and they visited, trying to sort out the pros and cons. When all was said and done, he decided to go to Iowa.

Soon after the decision was made, I received a call from Shauntel. She was happy to hear the news and just wanted to see how I felt about it. She said that that very morning when Camille got up, she had said to Shaunnie, "I wish Uncle Mike would come see us again!" Shaunnie knew that the committee was meeting that day and it seemed like an interesting coincidence that Camille's comment reflected Shauntel's thoughts. Anyway, I guess Mike will have a place for Thanksgiving dinner next November, even though he is far from home. I'm sure it will be a great blessing for both families to have each other a little closer.

John is making headway on his thesis and it looks like they might be able to finish up things in Provo by the end of June. Ford will fly them out to house hunt in April. David and Andrea have found a home and hopefully will be moving the middle of February. When an ultra-sound was done, the doctor moved her due date up two weeks so the baby is due around March 1st. We offered to help with the move, but David said that the movers

bring the furniture in, set things up, even unload the boxes for them so we'll not go over to help until the baby arrives. We are pleased that they have found a home.

Shauntel and Randy's ward was split yesterday so they have some changes ahead. Shaunnie was worried that several of her closest friends would be in the other ward. She has quite a support group who share a lot of the same challenges. It will be hard to not have them in the same ward, but the area had grown so much and there is getting to be more and more Mormon students attending the university all the time.

Steve will be traveling this week and Wednesday so Bonnie and family will be coming to spend a couple of days with us. SaraKay thinks she needs to miss school to help with the grandchildren, but I assured her that we will manage fine until she gets home each day. Originally, I told Bonnie to have the kids bring their swim suits thinking that Becky and her two and Bonnie and her four and I could take them swimming. But then I got to thinking and realized that it might be a little tricky. Maybe we'll save that activity until we have a few more Dad's available!

Grandma Richards' birthday is next Monday and Becky and I are going to leave on Sunday afternoon to spend a couple days in Utah. I will stay with Grandma and Becky will stay with the Seely's. Sunday evening Grandpa will come home for the night and visit with us the next day and Monday evening Kathy and Dick will take Grandpa and Grandma to dinner for a birthday celebration and Becky and I will head home. I appreciate Becky's willingness to come along. Last time we did this it worked well; she drove and I helped with Madison and Tate.

By the end of this month, Tim will have been out for six months on his mission. Two of the women who I walk with each morning, Janet Jenks and Robyn Anderson, are the mothers of two of Tim's best friends. Ryan has six months left and Shane has 11 months! It doesn't seem possible that this bunch of kids are that close to being through with their missions!

[Dad] We just finished having a short home evening and then painting the entry. It is a little lighter shade of green than the carpet and really looks pretty. I am glad we did it first, before we tackled the game room.

Today I had a staff meeting all day in Idaho Falls. There is always a lot going on in the council and it

takes a lot of meetings to stay on top of everything, do the training necessary, set the goals, and get the pep talks to accomplish the membership and money goals. I'm grateful for regular pay checks, the excellent benefits, and the caliber of people I associate with.

Sunday was a full day with meetings starting at 7:00 a.m., a ward conference pre-visit, correlation and youth council, and then our YM/YW Standards Night. We had Dr. Curtis Galke as our speaker. He is a new doctor at the Blackfoot Medical Clinic and has been an "Especially For Youth" speaker for 10 years and a "Know Your Religion" speaker. He was a flight surgeon in the Air Force and used his experience flying in an F-16 fighter plane as the basis for his talk about standards and the "Especially for Youth" pamphlet, words of the prophets, and scriptures relating to the why of the standards. It was a wonderful talk and he had everyone captivated, entertained, and challenged.

Saturday was largely spent on Rotary with a District Winter Assembly. I am an assistant district governor and as such helped to put the meeting together with phone calls, e-mails, letters, and more phone calls to all the clubs in Eastern Idaho. We had about 40 people there, so all my efforts paid off. That night we went to a Wood Badge beading ceremony for Bruce Ellis and the members of his owl squad. It was a sweet experience, an opportunity to see some dear friends, and a fine Dutch oven dinner. I had the opportunity of making my Endowment presentation at the Targhee District (Rexburg & Sugar City) Recognition Dinner. I had some great success with several more contacts and commitments for James E West Fellowships. I am always amazed at how many people I know at these kinds of events--dating back to our years at Ricks and time in the Mission Presidency, as well as current experiences in Scouting and Wood Badge over the last 8-10 years.

[Mom] When we got up this morning, SaraKay didn't feel well so I suggested that she go back to bed. She took some medicine and laid down, but was soon up, determined to go to school. Her intramural team was playing at noon and she wanted to be there. Reluctantly I agreed and she left only to call a couple of hours later, sick and needing to come home. When I arrived at the principal's office, she was in a back room lying on a cot. She had been sitting in a chair and passed out and fell onto the floor. A friend sitting nearby saw her fall and alerted the secretary and they

had her lie down until I arrived. I guess school and piano are over for today. Hopefully she'll be better tomorrow.

Last Wednesday Bonnie and four arrived for a short but fun stay. Steve was working in Pennsylvania for part of the week and they had scheduled to have their wood floors refinished and needed to vacate for a couple of days. We thoroughly enjoyed having them here. Nathan made a beeline for the Legos and Lincoln logs and between videos and dress-up clothes, everyone stayed occupied. Becky and kids came and we enjoyed some good visiting.

On Thursday morning Bonnie planned to visit her sister, Shannon, but a snow storm moved in and I worried that it might not be safe for them. Bonnie reassured me that they would be fine and they left about 11. As the wind picked up and the snow continued, so did my concerns for their safety. A little while after one, as I was sitting at my desk studying, I heard Rachel and Nathan laughing outside. When I opened the door, I spotted Bonnie's van stuck in the driveway and Bonnie carrying Jared and helping Chrissy get to the house through the deep snow. From my own experiences with minivan's, I knew how helpless they can be on bad roads.

Bonnie's van was in snow halfway up the tires. I donned some snow gear and grabbed the scoop shovel and with Rachel cheering me on, we attempted to shovel the snow away from the tires. Pam Cox was driving by and stopped to help, but we couldn't get it to rock enough to get the momentum we needed. Pretty soon a man in a pickup drove by and seeing our plight, offered to help. We tried several things until finally he was able to drive it up onto our cement pad.

After Pam and the gentleman left, I tried to convince Bonnie that she needed to stay another night until the storm quit and Daddy could help us get her vehicle out of the driveway. By the time I got into the house, she was just carrying the last of the suitcases upstairs and she had the kids ready to go. She was full of faith that they could make it if we could just get her out of the driveway; she suggested we have prayer. Before she left, we shoveled the area by the bushes so she could drive out going forward instead of backing out. The plan was for me to stand out by the road so that I could signal her when the roadway was clear and she could make a run for it without having to stop and look both ways for traffic. I'll admit that I had my doubts but she

carefully backed out and when I signaled, she got going and never stopped until she had successfully plowed through the deep snow and onto the road. My last sighting of her was she and the van and kids fish-tailing down the ice packed road enroute to Wellsville.

A while later Steve called from the airport in Chicago to see if Bonnie had left yet and I tried to sound calm and confident that they were on their way and would soon be home. Fortunately, they did arrive safely and the drama drew to a close two hours later when Bonnie called to say they had made it. She commented that the worst roads on the whole trip were between our house and the Riverside Highway!

Saturday morning SaraKay competed in the hoop shoot in Idaho Falls and came away with a first-place trophy and an invitation to compete in Boise on February 17th. Becky and Chet came to the competition to cheer her on and it was a pretty exciting morning. She competed against hoop shooters from Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Preston, and Salmon. Of the six first place spots, (3 age groups for girls, three for boys) five of them were won by the Blackfoot Elks' kids. The announcer commented that maybe they wouldn't invite Blackfoot next year! An added bonus is that we will be in Boise the very weekend that Dave and Andrea will be moving into their new home. It couldn't have worked out any better for us.

Before leaving Idaho Falls, we tried to reach Grandpa and Grandma Larsen to see if they had returned yet from their Arizona trip, but no one was home. When we arrived home, there was a message on the answering machine that they were home. Later that evening we reached them and learned that they had spent the day at the funeral for Alva Lu's sister. They had been notified earlier that week of her passing and had cut their stay short in Mesa to make it back for the viewing and funeral. Although her sister had been very ill for several months, Alva Lu commented that it is never easy to say good-bye and she was grateful that they made it back and could be there for all the events and family time.

She mentioned also that when they arrived in Mesa, they discovered that their condo had flooded and they had water in the bathroom and kitchen and in the carpets throughout the apartment. They had called the manager of the condos in advance so that the water and power would be on when they arrived and there had been a leak in a pipe that caused the flooding. It

was quite an ordeal for them to take care of all the business they had gone for and to clean up the apartment and get it ready to sale. They were grateful that before coming back on Friday they were able to spend a few hours visiting with friends from their mission and renew those acquaintances.

I arrived home last night about nine from visiting Grandpa and Grandma Richards. When I mentioned to Becky several weeks ago that I wanted to spend a day or two with my folks for my mother's birthday, she suggested that we go together. She offered to drive if I would help with Maddie and Tate. She would drop me off and then continue on to the Seely's to spend a day with Dot. So, on Sunday afternoon we left about three and had an enjoyable trip to Salt Lake, arriving a little after six. Maddie and Tate both slept almost the entire trip and the roads were clear.

Aunt Kathy had checked Grandpa Richards out of the rest home Sunday afternoon so when we arrived Becky and kids were able to stay for a while and visit with both of them before continuing on to Seely's. About 7:30 Paul and Jennie arrived and we spent a while visiting with them. It appears that we will be having a wedding this summer. Although an exact date hasn't been set, the plans are in the making and it looks like the wedding will be the last week in June. We are certainly pleased with Jennie and thrilled that she will be joining our family!

Monday morning Aunt Lisa called and asked if the last week in June would work for us for the Richards reunion as that was the only time that would work for everyone. I mentioned the wedding and said that maybe we should move ahead and our family would do what we could to join them. When I arrived home last night Daddy and I discussed the possibility of dove-tailing the Richards' reunion with the Steve Larsen reunion and the Paul Larsen wedding and we think that maybe this is what we need to do.

I spent a wonderful day yesterday with Grandpa and Grandma, helping do some thorough cleaning of kitchen cupboards. We all visited as we cleaned and it was fun. Their bishop, Relief Society president, and other friends all remembered Grandma's birthday and it was sweet to see the love and consideration that she is given by her ward members. It was especially nice to be able to have the extended visit with Grandpa and talk about some of his activities and insights. This

season of life is certainly not the most enjoyable for my folks, but they are accepting it with grace.

Becky picked me up about 4:30 and we headed home. Tate was fast asleep when we left Salt Lake so we hoped for another peaceful trip but we ran into a snow storm just outside of Ogden and it continued to worsen as we drove north. Becky was driving and I had positioned myself in the back seat between the two children's car seats (no small feat considering the small space and my big bottom) and I used pretzels, juice, bottles, animal crackers, dried apples, and anything else I could find in the diaper bag to keep Maddie and Tate happy. Between Tremonton and McCammon we were creeping along at 35 mph with nearly zero visibility. We sang songs, played make believe, made a quilt tent, and exhausted the toy bag to keep the troops happy. About the time we passed Malad, I lost the pacifier, and I thought for sure we were all doomed. Fortunately, the storm abated once we got on the other side of Malad Pass (and I found the pacifier) and we were able to resume a more normal speed.

When we finally arrived here, we were all tired and bedraggled. Tate was about fit to be tied from all the hours in the car and all three of them breathed a sigh of relief when they pulled into their garage and finally got out of their car seats. This morning Becky called to say that she had survived and we both agreed that we hadn't better do that again very soon! I did appreciate all her efforts to help me get to Utah and spend the day with my folks. I know she had a great time with Dot, too. As we were leaving Salt Lake, Maddie realized that we were headed home and she got her sad face on and started to cry, "But I want to stay with Grandma Seely in Utah!" I told Becky she needed to record that moment and be sure to pass it on to "Grandma Seely in Utah".

[Dad] My health continues to be good, even though the weight isn't continuing to melt off like I would like. Last Tuesday, I was crowned again. I am hoping that in about four more years we won't have to worry about paying someone else for our dental work—but we can keep it in the family. We bought a new car—a '97 Buick LeSabre—and have put the truck up for sale. Gasoline costs and miles were major factors in the decision—the truck has over 100,000 miles more than the Buick. Work has been interesting and fruitful and I hope to make significant progress with my fundraising.

You might be interested in knowing that Jacob had his Eagle Board of Review last week and I was

able to sign off as the Scout Executive on his application before it went to National. George Shail, who conducted the Board of Review, told me he was really pleased with my nephew. He said he was so forthright in all his answers, spoke up and said what he had to say, and looked you in the eye while he was talking. He said I could really be proud of Jacob and his family. Things like that are always good to hear—especially when they involve one's family. One other bit of news—you know of course, that Mike had decided on the University of Iowa Dental School—well, he just found out this week that he has a \$6,500/year scholarship to help with his costs. What a blessing!

February 6, 2001

[Mom] Last night Gary and Linda hosted the monthly family home evening. It was good to see everyone. Our new Sunday schedule doesn't leave us much of an afternoon after we've gone to meetings, choir, and had dinner, although it is nice to be able to sleep in a little longer. Some of you have asked regarding my Sunday School lesson. I am thoroughly enjoying it and I look forward, albeit with trepidation, to my opportunity to teach. For the first time in my life I am reading and enjoying the D&C. The Lord seems so personal and close and it's inspiring to study church history.

We really enjoy Tim's letters. He is having some wonderful experiences! I know he doesn't write us about the bad stuff, but I'm sure he is having his share of that, too. We appreciate the letters many of you are sending him and know that he is feeling a lot of love and support from family.

Steph and Linds have recently put their home on the market with the hope of selling it by spring and making a major change in their lives. If all goes well, they will relocate near a university where Linds can complete his degree. The house market is strong right now and they have given themselves plenty of time to find a buyer. This is the last step in a journey that began with their move to Indiana when Linds began his course work about 7 years ago. We are so grateful that things have worked together for them to be able to make this move.

Saturday Dad and SaraKay and I started on the basement as far as getting the wallpaper stripped. I quite enjoy the actual work of doing the remodeling, it's just hard to live in a mess while we are getting it done.

We received word from Laurel that John leaves March 2nd for China and will return on March 15th. It's hard to imagine how being gone that long will affect his coursework but I guess that is all worked out and he can do it without jeopardizing his graduation situation. What a wonderful opportunity!

I am going to quit and let Daddy take some space. He had an unbelievably big week last week with making presentations at three banquets as well as his daily assignments. Becky and Chet and their contacts in Idaho Falls have been a real asset to Daddy as he has tried to tap into the resources of the "rich and famous" in the Idaho Falls area. I think one 15 minutes session with them was worth more than several of his committee meetings with seasoned volunteers. He's excited about what's happening in his job and so grateful that he hasn't had to worry about all the details for scout camp this summer.

[Dad] As Sue mentioned, I had a busy week. I am making a 5-minute endowment presentation at each of the 18 Districts at their annual business meeting and Recognition Dinner. Wednesday night was South Fork (part of Rigby, Ririe, Swan Valley). I always enjoy these meetings with such good folk as the Scouters that are involved and faithful and as they are being recognized and applauded for their years of service to the youth and the community. I have been able to develop quite a list of endowment prospects as I have been observing and visiting with old and new friends. Thursday night was the only night with two dinners conflicting so I had made up the necessary materials and equipment for Steve Parry, my Endowment Vice President, to make the presentation in Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls) and I went to Bing Pow (Aberdeen, American Falls). We were successful in our visits and I appreciated Steve's willingness to fill in. Also, on Thursday I pulled together the Investment Committee meeting to review the performance of our Trustees handling the existing endowment funds. We have an excellent committee and it is always fun to meet with them. We were pleased with the performance of US Bank Trust Department in the face of a bear market as they were able to pretty much maintain the value of the trust.

Friday, I had my monthly Key Three Meeting with Steve Parry and Kim and then went out to the Lost River District Recognition Dinner. I have a lot of really dear friends in Arco & Moore and it was great to be there—especially since the dinner featured prime rib and was excellent in every way.

Saturday we hung pictures, clock, and wreath and finished our work in the front entry way. Sue and I also went carpet shopping for the downstairs game room. It is going to be a relief to get that job finished. Sunday, I had a pre-conference visit and then the Larsen Family Home Evening at Gary's. It is such a joy to gather and have such good feelings with my siblings and parents. Even though Gary and I don't have kids the same age as Rick's (with one exception) I know it is valuable to have this family experience for his kids.

February 12, 2001

[Dad] The bit of wisdom that I want to share with you this week comes from an article I read entitled "Tactics for a Life Plan." 1) Make your life partner your best friend and mentor. Treat each other with care and respect and set your partner's needs before yours. They'll be there for you when you're feeling low. 2) Find meaningful work. Your work defines who you are and enriches your days. Whether you're a retired person with a fascinating hobby, a volunteer, a stay-at-home parent, a student, or already pursuing a useful career, interesting and meaningful work gives life purpose and fulfillment. 3) Cut out or significantly limit your time in front of the television. The constant bombardment of commercials and programs portraying an "in your face" attitude chip away at a positive, upbeat outlook on life. 4) Learn something new every day. Listen well, read, take a class, or learn a new skill such as a sport, dancing, or playing a musical instrument. 5) Keep an eye to the big picture. Set little goals on the path to what you want to accomplish in life. Happiness is found in life's journey, not in its end. Make a list of all the things you want to experience and accomplish in your lifetime. Pick something small to tackle right away and choose something big from your list. Lay out a plan to attain these goals, then take the first small step. 6) Find something to have a good laugh about. Adopt a spirit of playfulness. Play a fun game with friends or children, especially those that require physical exercise and imagination. Fly a kite, play hide-and-seek, make a fort, have a scavenger hunt, or just tell a friend a joke. 7) Don't keep score when others let you down. Forgive, forget, and put your best foot forward.

At the Caribou's District dinner, they had a theme of thanks a million, modeled after who wants to be a millionaire. It was really cleverly done and unique. I am continually reminded of the strength of the volunteers and the incredible number of hours of service given to the youth.

[Mom] I have been taking an institute class the past several weeks at the Snake River Seminary. It is held each Tuesday night for two hours and runs for 16 weeks. I decided to take it to help me with my lessons on the D&C but the class is almost entirely history and my Sunday School class is focusing on the doctrinal content of the D&C. Despite the fact that we are covering different material, it has been a wonderful opportunity. One added advantage of taking the class is that since we are taught by all four seminary teachers, I have been able to see several different teaching styles. Although I haven't done a lot of substituting at the seminary this year, the times I have, have been intimidating. Since taking this class, I have taken notes on teaching techniques and hopefully I can implement some of them.

Last week SaraKay and I tried to practice hoop shooting for a while each day in preparation for this Saturday's competition. She hasn't been one to practice much and I told her that I would like to have her put forth some effort so that win or lose, she feels she has given it her best. We are leaving Friday to go to Boise, spend that night with David and Andrea (and see their new home) and attend the competition on Saturday morning. It's so nice to actually have family in Boise and know that we can make some visits whenever we go that direction. Andrea is just a couple weeks away from having the baby and so grateful to get this move made before the baby arrives. I'm sure they will all be overjoyed to have a little more running space again after living in a small apartment for the last three months.

Last Wednesday Becky offered to come help me strip wallpaper and it was fun working and visiting together. The whole family room is in such a mess with the furniture in the center of the room and everything askew, but the kids didn't seem to mind. SaraKay had the day off from school and she pretty much took care of Maddie so that Becky and I could work uninterrupted for most of the morning. By the time she left, the room was finished. I really appreciated her help and having her here sure made the task more fun. Now we are trying to make some decisions regarding carpet. We are trying to go slow enough to absorb the costs into our budget but now that we have started into the mess, we feel the pressure to finish up and restore order.

We miss Tim and appreciate his informative letters. He is having some wonderful experiences and it is a pleasure sharing in them.

The other night as Daddy and I went to bed, we talked about our family and the comings and goings of each one. We are so grateful that all of you are healthy, accident-free, and employed. There are so many people out of work and we know it is a blessing that you have the resources to care for your families. We are grateful that each of you have had the opportunity to get your schooling and that you have chosen to be active in the church and give of your time and talents in building up the kingdom. It's an awesome thought that when the Nauvoo temple is dedicated next year, Shauntel and Randy, John and Laurel, Mike, and Paul and Jenny will all be there for it. (I can feel a trip to the Midwest coming on already). We are grateful that Jeff and Jonie are raising their children with Christian values and that they are emphasizing education.

I spent some time in the temple last week and it just happened that I was in the wheelchair session. I was alone and had plenty of time before I needed to be back home so although the session was a little slower, it was sweet to be a part of it. Before the session started, I tried to locate Grandpa and Alva Lu but they were scheduled to be there later in the day. It's an added treat to get to see them when we go. Daddy had to go another night to fulfill stake obligations. When I called Mike Saturday morning, he was at the temple. Little did Daddy and I realize all those years ago when we paid our "widow's mite" to the Provo temple fund (\$25) that we would have such a wonderful "return" on our investment.

February 20, 2001

[Mom] Saturday we returned from Boise about 8:30 and soon thereafter we received a phone call from Paul and Jenny with the news that "it's official!" Yes! They were calling from Minneapolis where Jenny was being recruited for a job and Paul was taking the opportunity to visit the campus of the University of Minnesota\Twin Cities and get a feel for what the prospects are there. The company doing the recruiting was kind enough to pay for them both to make the trip and it was the perfect opportunity to escape the demands of school and get engaged. We are delighted with the news! Their decision as to whether to take the job in Minnesota is still up in the air but should be resolved by the end of this next week.

A few weeks ago, when I was visiting with Stephani about Paul and Jenny, Steph commented how exciting it was to have the

strength and diversity that these new spouses bring to the family circle. That's really true. Jenny comes from Bountiful, Utah and much of her extended family live in that area. Her maternal grandparents are presently serving a mission in Sweden. Her grandfather is a sealer in the Bountiful temple and will be returning the week prior to the wedding and be able to perform the ceremony. Jenny's grandmother Cutler is a widow who lives in the Bountiful area, also. Her father is an engineer but has also taught at the University of Utah. When she was a teen-ager her father had the opportunity to go to Norway with a company he worked for and so the family spent some time living in Norway, attending school, working and traveling. It was a rich and memorable experience for them all.

Jenny is a mechanical engineering major and has been attending BYU on scholarship. She served a mission in Japan and has been back about a year. She will graduate in April. She plays the violin but is also into sports and her whole family enjoys cross-country skiing. Jenny is the oldest of eight children, has one married sister and a brother who will be returning from a mission in July. Paul's biggest challenge is keeping up with her. She is so enthusiastic, capable, and committed to the gospel. We liked her the minute we met her! The wedding has been set for June 21st in Bountiful and we are planning a reception here for the 22nd.

Our trip to Boise was short but sweet. We arrived at Dave and Andrea's about 8:30 p.m. on Friday. The kids were already in bed and so we had a leisurely tour of their new home and some time to visit. Their home is west of Boise near the foothills and in a very nice subdivision. It is a year old and built in the modern style with the small parlor, and a large kitchen, family, dining area with most of the bedrooms upstairs. It has a large unfinished basement which gives them plenty of room to run. They had only been moved in two days before we arrived and so we enjoyed helping them get their kitchen unpacked and settled. It is such a beautiful home and I couldn't help thinking what a blessing it was that everything has come together for them to be moved in and relatively settled before the new baby arrives.

Saturday morning we left about eight for Bishop Kelly High School where the competition was being held. Dave and Andrea and family came later since they didn't need to be there for the preliminary events. SaraKay took third place in her division. She shot 14 out of 25. Second place shot

15 and first place shot 20. First, second and third all received a basketball, trophy, backpack and lapel pin for their efforts. Although mentally as you approach those competitions you know that it doesn't really matter how it turns out, it's still stressful and it is a relief to have it done.

Following the luncheon, we returned to Dave and Andreas and enjoyed being with their family for a few more hours before leaving for home. Yesterday Daddy and I spent the day working in the family room downstairs. Although we didn't finish the painting, we did finish up the hallway and we are both encouraged that this project may be completed in the next few weeks. Daddy is so valuable when it comes to house fix-up and repairs. His consistent early morning exercise program has not only helped him keep off the weight, but has given him a lot of stamina which comes in handy on days like yesterday. He started working at 6 a.m. and finished up about 6:30 p.m. Painting the ceiling was especially taxing, working with his hands over his head and his neck cocked back. Just watching him wore me out. Hopefully this won't have to be done again for another 20 years!

Mike called and told us about his "dream job" for the summer. He has been taking a herpetology class (frogs, snakes, toads, salamanders) and his professor brought the class some information about a job for this summer which is a government position and involves living out in the wild deserts of Utah and finding and recording sightings of herptiles (or whatever they are called.) Knowing Mike and his life-long love affair with all kinds of creatures, it isn't surprising that something like that would catch his interest. It pays good and he would be working relatively close to Provo so he could continue his dating. He is contacting the people doing the recruiting and checking into it.

We haven't heard anything from Jeff and Jonie so we are assuming that their trip to Arizona went well. Hopefully they didn't run into bad weather along the way. I know they are accustomed to some pretty extreme weather after this last winter in Minnesota. Paul mentioned that he had never felt so cold as he had on their Minnesota trip. While they were walking around campus the chill factor was -17 degrees!

[Dad] Sue has pretty well covered the subject. It was fun to be in Boise at Dave and Andrea's so soon after they had moved in. They certainly have a beautiful home and setting. We hope that they

enjoy the ward as well. SaraKay did well under the circumstances and we are pleased with her attitude. One of the highlights of the trip was shopping at Penney's and getting her a couple of Harry Potter shirts.

Work has been pretty steady with the district dinners ongoing. I am halfway through now. I have two dinners this week which will take me to eleven. Next week we have a finance conference in Jackson as a staff and are taking our wives. On Tuesday morning we will ride on the big trucks that feed the elk at the Elk Refuge. That is a wonderful experience where we get really close to the elk, buffalo, and deer.

February 28, 2001

[Mom] I'm sitting here in the Painted Buffalo Motel in Jackson Hole, Wyoming typing this letter on Daddy's laptop. We just returned from visiting the world's largest elk refuge. Kim Hansen, the council executive, arranged for us to ride on the feeding trucks while the refuge employees did the feeding. We climbed up into big bins full of alfalfa pellets and rode along on top of the load until we reached the herd several miles away. The trailers were pulled by beautiful Caterpillar vehicles with tracks instead of wheels since we were going to be out in deep snow. There were about 2200 elk in the herd we visited, mostly cows and calves although we did see a lot of bulls interspersed throughout the herd and even an occasional bison. We also saw some coyotes and some mountain goats. The feeder leaves a trail of pellets which fall onto the snow from the bottom of the bin with the sides of the bin being slanted to allow the pellets to slide down into the opening at the bottom of the bed just like a potato bulk bed.

We had been cautioned to dress warmly and we did. So, for the most part we didn't get too cold. The elk are fed for about two months out of the year to supplement what they can forage off the open range. The area we were in was called Poverty Flats although there were some beautiful homes against the wooded hills and mountains that looked like anything but "poverty". The whole experience, which took about two hours, was thoroughly enjoyable. A fellow who works as the manager of the refuge acted as our guide and rode with us in the back of the bed and answered questions about the area, it's history, and his perspective on wolf and grizzly reintroduction. What a treat!

Yesterday while the men were in meetings, the wives went window shopping. It was so fun! We saw some absolutely gorgeous Persian rugs which cost between \$2800 and \$5000! Several were even made of silk. The salesman, who was a native of Iran, said that no two are exactly alike and that the larger ones take a woman about 9 months to complete. We also browsed in several Indian craft stores, art galleries, museums, and other interesting shops. We left about one for home and thoroughly enjoyed the scenic trip over the pass and into Swan Valley.

Last Saturday we left about eight and drove to Tremonton where we met with the Cutler's and spent a couple hours going over wedding plans. Jenny's parents are certainly wonderful people and it was nice to get some of the big decisions made and move ahead with our plans. I know that Aunt Lisa sent a detailed letter out regarding the upcoming Richards reunion, but after our Tremonton meeting, I called her to let her know that the wedding schedule has been altered and I told her that I would include this information in this week's letter.

On Thursday, June 21st, the Cutlers will host a wedding dinner and dance at 6 pm in Bountiful. This will include siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and probably the older cousins who are able to come. The next morning at around 9:00 Paul and Jenny will be married in the Bountiful temple. That night we will host a reception in the Riverside Building from 7-9. Lisa said that she would do what she could to work around the altered schedule. I know that there will be some of you that can't be to everything but do the best you can. The Tuesday night cook-out (Richards) and the Wednesday water park (Richards) are the two main events of the reunion. Following the reception on Friday night here we will have Saturday and Sunday together here at our home to unwind and visit. If possible, it would work best if those of you who have relatives on your in-law side would arrange to stay with them during our time in Salt Lake.

Last Tuesday our ward shared the expense of renting the Pebble Creek ski resort above Pocatello and we decided to go and let SaraKay try her hand at skiing. We rented the gear and she and I went together to find the "bunny hill."

Several people gave her some good tips on what to do (put your skis in the shape of a pizza slice, a snow plow, not like two French fries). It proved to be pretty tricky and she was quite a trooper as she

made her way down the hill with me running along behind trying to help her get upright after each fall. At one point she wanted to quit but I encouraged her to keep working at it. Part way down the hill in order to avoid the traffic on the main run, we skied off to the side in the fresh powdery snow. She took a nose dive and by the time I got to her she informed me that she had lost one of her skis. I panicked. The snow was deep, the hill slanted, the night dark, and I imagined the ski sliding down the slope and arriving at the bottom, who knows where! She thought we should look around where she had fallen but I assumed that the ski was further down the hill and began to walk in that direction, trying in vain to spot the small white ski. We both fanned out and walked back and forth, the apprehension growing by the minute and me thinking about having to pay to replace the rented skis. To make matters worse, SaraKay developed a bloody nose and I didn't have a tissue and so we were trying to pack some snow around it to get it to clot and quit. After a futile search we decided to pray and there on the slope (as inconspicuously as possible) we prayed for help in locating the ski.

Not soon after, a ski patrol member spotted us and came over to ask if we had a problem. We shared our sorry plight with him and he asked where she had fallen. By that time, I was so far away from the spot that I wasn't really sure where, but he began poking his ski pole in the snow. Apparently, skis are made so that when the boot disengages from the ski, the bottom part forms a brake that will dig into the snow and prevent the ski from sliding downhill. Often it will run right under the snow and stop so that by poking the area with a pole, a person can locate the hidden ski. If it is not located, the person will forfeit their rental fee but will not have to pay for the entire ski package. Come spring the resort personnel gather all the lost skis off the hill, match them back up and that's the end of the problem.

This news relieved me but nicer still was the fact that a few minutes later the patrol member did find the missing ski in precisely the location where SaraKay had fallen a half hour earlier. Following the discovery, SaraKay wanted to return to the lodge and call it a night, but I suggested that rather than climb all the way back up the hill that we take the ski lift. Janet Jenks had taken it with Karina and even though usually non-skiers can't use the lift, because of the ward renting the facility for the night, I assumed I could talk them into letting me ride it with SaraKay. They agreed

and we climbed on and began our ascent. It was so frightening to sit in that little chair with no restraints and realize that we could just tumble out if we made a wrong move. Needless to say, we hung on to the chair and each other and rode effortlessly up to the top of the infamous hill. The next challenge was getting out and we watched with horror as we realized that it didn't stop to let you out. So, we calculated the moment and both of us took a flying leap out and onto the snow. Without skis I immediately slid onto my bum and SaraKay wasn't far behind. Luckily, we weren't the only novices on the hill that night and the group behind us did pretty much the same thing so we didn't feel too stupid.

By this time SaraKay had had it and we headed for the lodge only to be intercepted by our neighbor, Lucinda Mangum, who coaxed SaraKay into trying the slope one more time before quitting for the night. She gave SaraKay some warm gloves and a fresh, dry ski hat and took her ski poles away and gave them to me for safe keeping. She had SaraKay hang onto her ski pole and Lucinda skied along with SaraKay close behind doing the "snow plow" technique. Once they were out of sight, I retreated to the warmth of the lodge to tell my tale to Daddy. Soon I went out again to rescue SaraKay and found her high overhead riding the lift and thoroughly enjoying herself. She had been down the slope several times with Lucinda in front and for the first time all evening, she was enjoying the occasion. We had to eventually coax her into quitting and heading home with us. Thanks to Lucinda for turning the night around and making it a positive experience for us all!

I will end with a request that each of you be mindful of each other in your prayers. We have a lot of needs right now as far as our family goes and although there isn't much that we can do except pray, I know that praying works and that the Lord will be mindful of us. Andrea has had her delivery date delayed a few days and that has been wearing and worrisome to them as they try to coordinate the event with mothers and family situations. Steph and Linds have their home on the market and are anxious to get it sold and their change effected. Tim has been transferred and we haven't heard from him for a couple of weeks and our prayers go with him. Grandpa Larsen has taken a couple of bad falls these last couple of weeks. Mike is in the throes of lining up financing for dental school and wading through the mountains of details and paperwork associated

with that. Paul and Jenny have just about decided to take her job offer in Salt Lake and let Paul continue his schooling at the "Y" rather than disrupt things just before he graduates. John leaves this weekend for China and Laurel faces the prospect of being a single parent for two weeks (right in the middle of flu season). I know that everyone faces their own challenges and our prayers are constant for your health and safety.

[Dad] Sue has told you about our Jackson experiences and I would just like to add that it was really a treat to be able to have the wives go with us. We were able to sit together and have a good visit with Kim Hansen and his family and courting and grieving over the loss of his wife, Linn, last year. I had a brief presentation to make to the staff regarding endowment and how each of them should keep their eyes and ears open to be able to guide me to those who have certain needs and situations where charitable giving tools may come to play in assisting them to reach their goals. We ate at the Acadian House on Monday night. They had a Mardi Gras atmosphere and Cajun cuisine.

One of the highlights of last week was our ward party at Pebble Ski Resort. I thoroughly enjoyed sitting around visiting with people in the lodge, drinking hot chocolate and eating donuts. Sue was outside running down the ski hill behind SaraKay and helping her to get back up when she fell down. Sister Mangum offered to help SaraKay learn to ski and worked with her and she ended up having a great time and eager for more.

March 13, 2001

[Mom] SaraKay and I are alone tonight for FHE. Daddy left yesterday afternoon with some other scout professionals for Reno, Nevada where they will be attending three days of seminars. He will return late Wednesday night after catching another district dinner enroute in Malad.

Sunday morning Paul, Jenny, Laurel, Emma and James left about eight for Provo after spending the weekend with us. Although their stay was brief, it seemed like we still got in a lot of good visiting time. I was grateful for the opportunity to talk with Paul and Jenny about wedding plans. Although I have made the big decisions regarding scheduling the building and caterer, the other details are still in the planning stage. Jenny is so pleasant to have around and always helpful when there's a need. She is certainly going to be an asset to Paul and our whole family. Saturday afternoon Becky and Chet and family joined us

and it was fun to see Emma and Maddie playing together.

I was grateful that Paul and Jenny were able to travel with Laurel and help her with the kids. She had been with her sister, Karen, in Holladay for a few days before coming here and the kids were missing their dad and not sure what was going on. I was glad that we were able to fill a few more days with some diversions to shorten the time until John returns. When I talked with Laurel Sunday evening, she said that it was obvious that both Emma and James were pleased to return to their own home and beds after the week's absence. John called Sunday morning and was worn out and ready to come home. It will be a relief to get this trip behind them and focus on finishing things up these next few weeks before graduation.

I am leaving on Thursday for Boise. If all goes as planned, Andrea will be induced Friday. I'm hoping to stay until Sunday and be of some help. This will be the first time we've lived close enough that I could offer assistance and I'm looking forward to sharing in this special time with them. Andrea's mother has been there with them this past week helping out. I haven't decided yet if SaraKay will go with me. She would need to miss school on Friday and an activity on Saturday and Daddy and I haven't quite got the arrangements figured out.

SaraKay won the fifth-grade spelling bee last Tuesday. She had been faithful about studying her words each night and was prepared. She competed against 43 other top students who had advanced from their individual classes. She spelled several difficult words and eventually won by spelling "Renaissance" and then "environment". She won \$25. Thankfully, the winners do not advance on to another competition. It is fine with me that she is through and we don't have to work that into our nightly routine anymore.

March 6, 2001

[Mom] Several of you have asked regarding Andrea. She was hoping to be induced last Thursday but the doctor felt that she wasn't ready and she had an appointment again on Friday morning but the doctor still wouldn't move ahead. It has been frustrating for them, but when I talked with her Friday night she was in good spirits and trying to be patient. Her mother arrived Friday afternoon and is going to stay until the baby comes and then help out with Andrea's recovery. I am a phone call away and available, too. The due

date was originally set for March 17th and Andrea still feels like that is correct, but the ultra-sound put her date at March 5th. She prefers having her babies early so that they don't get too big and threaten complications with her tail bone. Remember her in your prayers.

Friday night Steve and Bonnie spent the night with us. They were in the area for a family party and we enjoyed having them here. The children are growing up and the three oldest pretty much take care of themselves. Jared is crawling all around and into things now but he is such a good-natured baby that he is a joy to have around. Saturday, they left about 11:30 to spend some time with Shannon and Doug.

Last night we hosted the Larsen home evening. It was especially nice to have Staff join us and fill us in on family news. They have a wedding coming up on May 29th in the Salt Lake Temple. Jimmy is marrying a girl that he met on his mission. She is from Ogden and they have been dating since she returned home last October. Staff and Kathy are still living in Las Vegas. Jennifer and her two children are living with them until Jenn gets her feet under her following her divorce. We were sorry to hear about that. Thank goodness she has loving parents who can help her get through this.

Janette, Mark and Rita's second daughter, also joined us. She is a freshman at BYU-Idaho and heard we were getting together and called to check on the time. We were delighted to have her come. It was fun to get to see her again and learn about her experiences. This next fall she and Jeff, who will return from his mission in August, will be attending BYU-Idaho together. That should be fun for them.

Although it was special to have so many of the family able to come, we did miss Becky and Chet who were involved in Becky's final piano recital of the year. They had just returned Saturday night from a short trip that Chet received as a bonus at work. Becky said it was a wonderful trip, but hard to come back to all the responsibilities and pressures. Chet's folks came from Utah to help with the kids.

Daddy and I celebrated our anniversary by going to a movie and out to dinner. This was our 35th and we wondered about doing something exotic, but we both agreed that we would rather see our project downstairs completed than spend the money elsewhere. The movie we saw was "Vertical Limit" and about 2 minutes into the show I wondered if we had made a mistake. It was truly a

"nail-biter" and one you would enjoy if you like action films. I know Mike saw it and loved it. After the movie we went to dinner but I was so shook up from the movie I had nearly lost my appetite. Anyway, we had a wonderful anniversary and it was nice to take time to reminisce about years gone by and how grateful we are to be at this stage of our lives. Daddy is such a kind and loving husband and I continue to feel grateful for my inspired choice made over 35 years ago!

Laurel called last night and told me of a hair-raising experience she had Saturday afternoon. She was driving to a birthday party that Emma had been invited to attend. She approached a busy intersection and stopped for the red light. Seconds before the light turned green, she noticed a girl in the car beside her and thought for a split second that it was an old mission companion of hers. Being momentarily diverted from her driving, she was unaware that the light had changed and when she saw that it was green, she started into the intersection. Out of nowhere a car came barreling through the intersection on a red light and whizzed by the front of her car. Had she been in the intersection a second sooner the other vehicle would have hit her broadside. Both she and James, who was on the driver's side in the back in his car seat would probably been seriously injured or killed.

Although Laurel escaped injury, four other cars were not so fortunate. She estimated that the car was going close to 60 mph. She was so rattled that she had to pull over to the side of the road and gain control before she could continue on. Looking back into the traffic, she saw that the other four vehicles had sustained considerable damage and possibly injury to the occupants. Her momentary hesitation before moving into the traffic saved her life. It was especially humbling to think of what a difficult situation it would have been trying to locate and notify John who left the day before for China. Her experience reminded me again of our constant need for the Lord's blessings and watch care. We are so grateful that she was protected.

Stephani and Lindsay had their own miracle a couple weeks ago which has enabled them to move ahead with their plans. The contractor who built the homes in their subdivision had used faulty pipe for part of the plumbing and so the homes with leaks were on schedule to have the repair work done. This work would take about two weeks to complete. Since Steph and Linds' home had not had any problems yet, they were way

down on the list for repairs. They didn't feel good about selling the home before the repairs had been made even though the problem hadn't manifest itself yet. About three weeks ago, they sprung a leak. This event catapulted them to the top of the repair list and the builder quickly came in and worked to get the problem solved and things put back together. During that time, they withdrew their realtor listing and then put it back on the market last week. Now with the upcoming spring, the housing market is more active and they can move ahead with getting it sold. As Stephani related this story to me, she commented that so many miraculous things, both large and small, have happened that have opened the way for them to make this move.

[Dad] I am eternally grateful for the companion I have and the 35 years we have shared already. One of the greatest rewards of our marriage is the wonderful family we have been blessed with. Each of you are such a source of joy to us and we are thankful for the good lives you are leading and the many exciting things that are going on in our family. Truly, there is never a dull moment!!

Our basement project is shaping up. We have started ripping out carpet and pad and getting ready for the replacement in a couple of weeks. Last night we completed the painting of the walls--the trim is all that's left as far as painting goes. We are looking at getting the molding and trim in place and painted and being ready for the carpet layers in two weeks. Fortunately, our tax return will just about cover the expense of the carpet. We are really pleased with the way things are looking and the lightening and modernizing of that huge room. After this, we will wait until after the wedding before we take on any other projects.

March 19, 2001

[Mom] I arrived home yesterday about five from my trip to Boise. Daddy had such a busy day with meetings that he and SaraKay were just sitting down to dinner and so I joined them and filled them in on my weekend activities with David and Andrea. It was a sweet experience to be with them for the birth of Chantelle and to be able to spend some time with Laurel (Andrea's mother) and the children. I arrived on Thursday night and we left for the hospital the next morning about seven. It took until nearly noon for Andrea to start into some regular pains.

The maternity ward at St. Alphonsus Hospital is a beautiful facility. The halls have been decorated with art work portraying mothers, newborns, and

toddlers. They are so inspiring and add so much. The birthing room was very nice and was even furnished with a rocking chair and a place for the baby. It was an interesting experience for me to participate in the birthing of a baby. I had mixed emotions about it from the time Andrea invited me but I put my fears aside and participated and was grateful to be a part of the experience. I knew it would be hard to watch her go through the pain, feeling helpless to do anything. Because of the problems with her tail bone, she didn't have an epidural. She hoped that as labor intensified, she could feel the pressure and adjust her position for relief from the pain. Chantelle Elise was born at 6:17 p.m. on March 16th, weighing 7 pounds, 13 oz. and was 20 and ¼ inches long. She has short black hair and a beautiful little face.

Within half an hour after birth Andrea realized that the problem was back again. She spent the next two days in a lot of pain, moving slowly and doing her best to navigate through the inconvenience and pain. She has decided to see an orthopedic surgeon this week.

She has addressed this before with other doctors but most of them just push it aside and say that childbirth is never easy. Her birth with Joseph was so much easier than the other three that she knows the difference and is determined to get some help. Our prayers are with her. Fortunately, her mother is able to stay and help her for a while longer. I offered to keep Joseph and the girls here with us for a while but they thought that it would be too upsetting for them to be removed from the home and that the adjustment would be better if they stayed at home for these first few weeks.

It was sweet to have the time with Laurel, Angela, and little Joseph. I took my sewing machine to patch up a couple of jackets that David had borrowed during the time he was living alone in Boise. The sewing machine was a very popular item. Laurel and Angela brought down some of their clothes and Barbie clothes that needed a stitch here and there and the bunch of us enjoyed working on them together. Joseph used the spools of thread like blocks and he kept himself occupied for a considerable time with that. It brought back memories of the times I would come home from school and Grandma Gooch would be there visiting with Mother and doing some mending. I used to think that my mother would let her do it so she felt needed but after having a family of my own, I know that Grandma's help was not only needed, but greatly appreciated!! My motto is going to be: Have sewing machine, will travel!

A couple of weeks ago Grandpa Larsen let us know that he and Alva Lu were going to be released from the temple presidency. The responsibilities were getting too heavy and it was for the best. I know that it was hard for them. They have given wonderful service and won the love and admiration of those they have worked with. I have already had comments from temple workers, expressing appreciation for their labors. Following their release, they are going for a short trip to Mexico with one of Alva Lu's brothers and spouse. I hope they have a wonderful and relaxing time and can come back feeling rested. They haven't had much time for personal interests since moving into the town house and I know they have some projects they are interested in doing.

The carpet layers are here today and hard at it although it will be tomorrow before they bring the carpet. Daddy worked nearly 12 hours on Saturday doing the finish work so it would be ready for today.

This week I am finally going to start focusing on the wedding, update my guest list, and meet with the caterer. The time is quickly passing and before we know it, it will be June. I'm excited to join the Provo bunch for graduation and look forward to that special time.

John returned from China on Wednesday night. I know he worried about Laurel and the little ones. They have had a lot of sickness this last month. Laurel was especially sick with an allergic reaction to some medication she was on for an infection but she assured him that she was on the mend.

As a part of the experience the group toured many of the famous places including the tera cotta soldier's site and the Great Wall. He had the opportunity to spend Sunday with his mission president, President Stratford, and go to some meetings with his family. John will have to write and fill us in on the whole trip. We were thrilled that he was able to do it although the results of their study for the heating company were not very optimistic.

[Dad] We left Sunday afternoon with several other members of the staff to fly to Reno for the Western Region Finance summit. We stayed in the Silver Spur and our meetings were right there as well as the meals that were a part of the forum. We spent a full day on Friends of Scouting, ½ day on Endowment, ½ day on Capital campaigns, and 1/2 day on special events such as auctions, golf tournaments. There was a lot of good information and brain- storming sessions. I am always

astounded at the number of slot machines and games of chance going on in every public place in Nevada (except the rest rooms).

On the way home from the airport on Wednesday, three of us stopped in Malad for their district dinner and my endowment presentation. It was really tight getting there, changing clothes, and getting all set up in time. It was about 10:00 that night when I had Sue come to the Blackfoot scout office to get me. I spent Friday night and all-day Saturday finishing up the moldings, painting, removing carpet and pad, and cleaning up in preparation for the carpet layers. I took an hour off on Saturday to give blood at the Church.

I sure missed Sue while doing that work—it's always more fun to work together on major projects like that. I was grateful that she could be there for Andrea, however, and knew that was the most important place for her to be at the time. We were sure glad to see her come in the back-door Sunday night.

March 26, 2001

[Mom] Saturday was an absolutely glorious spring day. Daddy had an all-day Wood Badge training seminar but SaraKay and I donned sweatshirts, work gloves, and worked in the yard for several hours. The sky was a bright blue and birds were everywhere. SaraKay commented that the previous day she had been outside sitting on the swing and thinking, "Isn't life beautiful!" I had to admit that spring has a way of evoking that same response in me. Maybe it's because I get so tired of the cold and snow by the time spring arrives. I'm not sure what it is, but the season always brings with it a rejoicing in new life, things green, and the promise of warmer days.

For much of the afternoon I raked dried grass and weeds from the windbreak and SaraKay hauled it to be piled until we could get it burned. The grass was almost as tall as she was and when she had her arms full, she looked like a walking hay stack. The Aussie trees are on the verge of budding out and the damp earth was fragrant and alive with bugs and night crawlers.

The pine trees along the back of the yard seem to have grown at least a foot taller over the past year and are thriving. The new growth on the tips of each branch are a lime green color and its softness is in sharp contrast to the stiff and prickly needles of years past. These trees have become a part of the family and we monitor their size and

watch them take on a personality all their own. As we cleared out the debris under the large fir trees on the southwest corner, I could hear the wind blowing through the boughs and it brought back memories of life on the ranch in South Dakota and the sound of the wind in the pines. The aspen trees that were infected last year with a blight have come through the winter looking good and one of them was budded out with tiny furry tips similar to a pussy willow.

When Daddy arrived home about 5:30 we took a stroll around the yard and made a mental list of the things that needed to be done in the coming weeks. Hopefully spring will bring opportunities for you and your family to work together and enjoy "the good earth."

We learned last week that Jenny had just received word that she had been selected by the National Science Foundation to receive one of 40 awards given nationally to outstanding science students. This award is for graduate work and includes tuition at the school of her choice and an \$18,000 a year stipend to assist with living expenses. What a wonderful honor! Jenny wasn't sure how this would alter the plans that have been made for a job verses school but she and Paul are giving it prayerful consideration. We are so pleased to hear about this award and certainly impressed and proud of her!!

My thoughts and prayers have been with Andrea and David. I know the first few weeks following the birth of a new baby are traumatic in the best of times and with complications it gets even trickier. I'm grateful for Andrea's mother and for her willingness to help them through this recovery. She was up and about for part of Thursday but has tried to give her body the time it needs to recuperate. Chantelle is nursing well and thriving. David spent Saturday helping in the yard and taking the kids to the playground to give them all a break.

SaraKay received her Christmas gift from Jonie in the mail today. It was a beautiful, pieced quilt in a star pattern. At first glance I thought the star was woven into the fabric, but upon further examination I realized that the entire top of the quilt was pieced together and quilted. I was impressed again with Jonie's amazing talents and especially with her abilities with her hands! Thanks, Jonie, for this gift; it fits her room perfectly!

The room downstairs is complete and we are very pleased with how it turned out. After 20 years of

use and abuse, it is nice to have it look so clean and modern with new carpet. We are really pleased and surprised at how light and spacious the game room seems.

It was so fun last night to have John, Stephani, Stephen, Mike and SaraKay on chat. The jokes really get going with that many tossing things around. Mike received a lot of advice on his present romance and tips on pickup lines to use. He was a good sport about it! If he has any sense at all, he will disregard most of the suggestions.

[Dad] One of the major efforts in last week's work was rather fruitless. We had advertised and invited about 600 people to two Estate planning seminars that we held in Pocatello and Idaho Falls. We had a couple of fine attorneys to present these seminars, but only had two people show up in Pocatello and no one in Idaho Falls. We had an excellent session with someone with some potential and a really fine young African American who lives and works in Blackfoot. It just so happened that his wife was one of the judges of the Idaho Falls Junior Miss Program on Saturday that Becky was involved with.

Tonight when I got home from work I spent a couple of hours outside working in the yard. The wind was howling and it was cold, but I still enjoyed being outside and working in the soil. I was a little frustrated today because I spent all day making phone calls that I had asked a secretary to make last week to the Scouting Values Art Tour in Ogden where we will get to see some paintings of Norman Rockwell and Joseph Ctsari. We are supposed to have about 30 from our Council and it looks like we will fall short of that.

April 2, 2001

[Dad] We are having a problem with our computer; I'm afraid the hard drive is dying so we are doing this family letter on my laptop from work. This past week was a busy one-especially the weekend. Last Thursday, Sue and I went to Ogden for a national Scouting Values Art Tour. There was an Estate Preservation Seminar in conjunction with the exhibit and a nice reception and program recognizing some major donors in the surrounding councils. It was a delightful trip for us to have the time together and to talk about all the things going on in the family right now. Friday night, SaraKay had a slumber party, so we rented a couple of good movies and watched them together.

Saturday, Becky and her kids joined us for the ride to Provo. We took three big boxes of John's stuff from the storage room and we were really packed into the car with the six of us. It was a delightful time together, however, and the kids were good and we were able to get a lot of visiting in. The Seely's came to Provo to get Becky and the kids and then dropped them off at the rest home in SLC for the ride home.

It was a treat to go to the General Priesthood Meeting with John, Mike, and Paul in the Marriott Center. I thrilled as Elder Eyring addressed us as the shepherds of Israel and reminded us that we must protect and nourish the sheep, following the Savior's example of willingness to give His life for the sheep. Elder David Sorensen informed us that you can't pet a rattlesnake and counseled us to follow the example of Captain Moroni and build up our fortifications against the enemy. I enjoyed Elder Groberg's message about the power of the priesthood being unlimited and our power in the priesthood being limited by our purity. Those wonderful messages were hardly eclipsed by the messages of the First Presidency. We were especially touched by President Hinckley's message about the Perpetual Education Fund to help fund education for returning missionaries in lesser developed countries to break the cycle of poverty and to better qualify them for continuing service in the Lord's kingdom.

The whole conference was wonderful and we reveled in the messages of inspiration and encouragement and recognized the inspiration of each speaker, prayer, and the music. What a wonderful tool the new Conference Center is in providing more of the Saints an opportunity to sit at the feet of the prophets and be instructed.

[Mom] It's interesting to note that when October rolls around this year John will be attending priesthood session alone in Michigan and Mike in Iowa with Randy. Maybe with some careful planning Steve, David, Chet, Paul, and even Linds might get together for some priesthood sessions in the future. It's interesting to see the "ebb and flow" of the family as jobs change.

Chet was gone on a business trip so we were glad to have Becky along going to Provo and give her a break from her normal routine. John and Laurel are always so nice to let us set up camp at their apartment and enjoy ourselves. It was fun to just sit on the floor, watch conference, and play with the kids. Laurel had an enormous bucket of toys and the kids kept busy investigating its contents.

Jenny offered to fix pizza for our group and Laurel prepared a delicious salad and we ate like kings. While the men attended priesthood session us women had a good talk. Following the session, we left to drive back to Salt Lake and spend the night with Grandma and then spend some time with Grandpa the next morning before conference started. We listened to conference enroute home and Maddie and Tate cooperated and took good naps.

I visited with Andrea's mother, Laurel, today and got an update on Andrea's condition. She had x-rays taken which showed that the tailbone has been broken off and part of it is floating free and causing all the pain she has been experiencing. She is meeting with the surgeon Wednesday morning to get his advice and hopefully schedule surgery. She is still in a lot of pain and unable to move about much. We are praying that she can get help and won't have it to deal with again.

Stephani called yesterday to give us an update on the situation with their home. They have a good offer from a couple, which is contingent upon the sale of their own house. They also have another couple coming to see the house again this weekend who is interested. The market is starting to pick up now that spring has arrived and they are hoping to get a sale soon.

With this coming Sunday being fast Sunday, we would like to invite you to join us in fasting for Andrea and also for Steph and Linds. I know that both families have appreciated the concern and the prayers offered.

Before I sign off, I wanted to mention some facts that my sister, Kathy, related to me in a phone call Saturday night. She and Dick have recently been called to serve at the Utah prison facility at the point of the mountain. They attend worship services every other week at the prison and hold a monthly home evening with their assigned "family member" inmate. Kathy said that the guards leave the inmates at the door to the chapel and there are no restraints on them as they participate in the two hours of meetings each Sunday. Their services include singing, prayers, talks, and testimonies. They are not permitted to partake of the sacrament until they have paid their debt to society and completed their prison term. She said that the meetings are so spiritual and that there are men are from every walk of life, even returned missionaries and former bishopric members. She mentioned that the testimonies are stirring and the Spirit is very strong.

On Monday night once a month they attend opening exercises for Family Home Evening and then they spend one-on-one time with their family member for the remainder of the evening. It has been a beautiful and positive experience for her and Dick and reaffirmed to them the love the Lord has for all his children. She said that there are about 4500 inmates at the facility and that there are presently nearly 2500 volunteers from the church who serve in some capacity.

As some of you are aware, it was the prisoners from Utah who recently completed the CD listing 480,000 names of former black slaves who enrolled at the Freeman's Bank following the Civil War. This CD has been made available to Afro-Americans throughout the world and in the first month there were over 30,000 requests for it. The black community has been overjoyed to receive the information. This project has taken hundreds of hours and effort on the part of the inmates and prior to completing the project they wrote a proclamation to the blacks offering this wonderful gift of service and saying that as ones who could identify with their bondage in times past, they had gladly provided this service to them.

Kathy also mentioned that four of their close friends in the ward (couples) have recently been called to work as members of the inner-city wards. These couples attend the inner-city wards and are assigned to specific families who need mentoring and help. They assist them in finding housing, jobs, and learning coping skills. They help them to solve the problems they are facing and work to get them on their feet and functioning again. Of all the families in these wards who are being helped through this program, four out of five aren't even LDS. What a powerful influence and help the Church is being to the poor and downtrodden! It is heartwarming to hear of these and similar programs that are under way to meet the needs of the underprivileged. The Perpetual Education Fund is just another example of the wonderful humanitarian services the Church offers. Isn't it great to be a part of this church and to see the good it is doing? Daddy felt that so many of the Brethren stressed the importance of senior missionary couples and pleaded with them to put aside their worldly pursuits and serve missions. As my sister, Kathy, said at the conclusion of our visit, "It's time for us to step up!"

April 10, 2001

[Mom] Dad and Alva Lu had an enjoyable trip to Mexico and are now home and trying to decide

what they want to do as far as their condominium is concerned. There are several condos in the complex where they live which have more living space on the main level as well as the master bedroom and they are wondering if they should trade condos and get into something that is more convenient and has less stairs. When they moved to Idaho Falls, they were under such a tight schedule that they didn't have a lot of time to wait for just the right one to come vacant. It's nice for them to have some time now to address these matters. Grandpa celebrated a birthday on the 4th and he and Daddy went to lunch and had a nice visit.

Grandma Richards has had some car trouble lately but she is supposed to get her car back from the garage today and hopefully that will be the end of the problems. Her brother, Don, is so good to her and invaluable in times like this when she needs a lift. Kathy and Dick loaned her their car in the interim and she saw Grandpa each day. He had some tests run yesterday as he is starting to have some dizzy spells again. The eye that was operated on is still not very good and his sight is limited. It is very discouraging for him and the last couple of times we've visited he's been down.

Stephani and Linds have a contingent offer on their home. Their friends from the ward are trying to sell their home and if it sells, then Steph and Linds have accepted their offer. If it doesn't sell, they will keep their home on the market. Their realtor is vacationing in Europe for two weeks so there hasn't been a lot of activity but she will return this weekend and hopefully things will pick up again. They have an ideal situation since they aren't pressed to sell and Lindsay has a good job until he is ready to make the change. Of course, we are anxious for them to make the move before wedding time, but they have assured us that they will be coming one way or another.

Randy and Shauntel have been meeting with social services and getting the process going again to get another baby. Shauntel mentioned that she is going to pick up some pamphlets published by the agency outlining "designated adoptions". These are adoptions in which the birth parents designate a couple who they want to have adopt their baby. The pamphlet outlines the procedure to follow in this type of adoption but the key is that friends and family of a couple who are interested in adopting a baby need to notify the couple if they know of a situation involving an unwed mother who is thinking of going the adoption route. It is critical that the proper

procedure be followed and hence the need for the pamphlet and the instructions. In the meantime, be aware that this new kind of adoption is the direction the Church is going because they are finding that the birth mothers are more willing to go the adoption route if they know the couple.

Jeff and Jonie recently made a trip to Arizona to visit her family. Enroute they had car problems and it turned out to be more of a marathon than they had planned. She said that when they got back home Jeff swore off traveling for a long time.

Steve and Bonnie are making plans to get their yard landscaped. Doug Williams, Shannon's husband, has some expertise in landscaping design and he is drawing up some plans. They are going to get the front and part of the back seeded and trees planted this spring and leave the lower back part for a garden. They have invited us to join with them this Saturday in their annual "egg hunt" and then attend Bonnie's Aunt Cecelia's Easter cantata that is being performed for the second year in the Logan Tabernacle. We are thrilled to be able to see this production and spend a fun day with them, too!

Andrea is still very limited in what she can do, but with the help of Laurel, Angela and David, they are getting by until the doctor can schedule her in for surgery. She is "on call" and if there is a cancellation, she will be the one called. In the meantime, she is doing the best she can to carry on. I'm sure she is ready to drop by nightfall after a busy day. Keep her in your prayers.

Becky had a lonely 10 days with Chet gone on company business. She has been very involved with her internet based "Mozart Math" and is trying out the lesson plans on a group of children who attend her friends' preschool. It has been very involved and intense finishing up the curriculum and making any needed adjustments. She has also met with a lawyer to establish a corporation and protect her idea. All in all, it has been very educational and exciting although she will be glad to have it completed.

John and Laurel will be flying to Michigan this week to house hunt. They are leaving Emma with Laurel's sister, Karen, in the Holladay area and taking James with them. They will be gone about five days. It's hard to believe that their BYU experience is about to come to an end. Although John will walk in April at graduation, his MBA won't officially be completed until the end of June with his thesis completion. It's an exciting time for

them and we wish them well with their house hunt!

Mike has secured employment for the summer at the INEEL again, only this time with an enhanced salary since he will be a graduate! We are looking forward to having him around before he ships off to the Midwest in August. His job starts April 30th so he won't have much time to kill after graduation. He has been dating a lot and thinks that he may be spending his weekends in Provo this summer.

Paul and Jenny are spending this coming weekend in Bountiful going over wedding plans with Jenny's mom. They have decided to rent John and Laurel's apartment until Paul finishes up next year. Jenny will be working in Salt Lake and commuting until Paul finishes up. He is enrolled for spring/summer and should graduate next April.

We haven't heard from Tim for nearly two weeks so we're assuming he may have gotten transferred. We love his letters and miss him. It's hard to believe that he's only been out eight months when one of his best high school friends already has his release date! It will be hard to have his friends start to come home but I know the time will fly.

SaraKay is preparing for festival on the 28th and for a violin duet for the Middle School Strings Program on the 24th. She has been sick with a constant cold and this cool, windy Idaho spring weather doesn't help much. Today she got hit in the mouth during PE and now she has a fat lip to go with her cold.

Daddy and I have both felt pretty harried lately with all the demands of work and church. I'm speaking in Church on Easter and worrying not only about what to say but how to say it without losing control of my emotions. Easter has always been an emotional Sunday for me.

[Dad] Last night for home evening, we had a special Easter lesson and decided we would have our own Easter sunrise service on Sunday with narration, scriptures, and songs. We felt like we needed to add a more spiritual tone to our celebration. I have been reading an interesting book, "Believing Christ" by Stephen Robinson. I would like to share a couple paragraphs from that book with you:

"In Hebrew the word Geth (gath) means 'press,' and semane (shemen) means 'oil' or 'richness.' Gethsemane therefore means 'the press of oil' or the 'press of richness.' This refers to the huge

presses for olives or grapes that were used to squeeze the oil or wine out of the pulp and that would be appropriately found in an olive grove like Gethsemane. Olives or grapes were put into the presses and squeezed until their juices flowed out of them.

"What an appropriate name for the Garden where Jesus took upon himself the infinite weight of the sins and sorrow of the world and was pressed with that tremendous load until the blood flowed through his skin. (See Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18.) Just as olives and grapes are squeezed in the press, so Jesus, the true vine (see John 15:1), was squeezed in Gethsemane, "the press," until his richness, his juice, his oil, his blood, was shed for humanity. No wonder that the wine of the Last Supper and of the Christian sacrament is such a fitting symbol for the blood of Christ--they are obtained by the same process."

What a sobering thought and interesting insight into the Savior's sacrifice for us. I am touched by thoughts of the depth of His suffering and especially His love for us that He would condescend to go through such agony.

I was able to get some special mailings out last week for the upcoming Council Recognition Night when we give out the Silver Beaver awards and when Sue and I do the VIP reception. We are getting geared up for it and it is great to not have camp to worry about. We got our trees pruned, a bunch of yard work done, and the garage cleaned over the weekend. Today the DI truck came and took a bunch of stuff we had decided to get rid of. It always feels like a load has lifted when we are able to de-junk.

One of the highlights of last week was taking Dad out to dinner for his birthday (82). We had such a good visit and time together. One of the things he wanted me to do was to tell him about each of my kids and what they are doing and then to tell him the names of each of the grandkids. That was a good challenge, but I rose to the challenge and was able to tell him each grandchild's name by family. Needless to say, he was impressed and remarked on the great posterity Sue and I have been blessed with.

April 17, 2001

[Mom] We had a wonderful Easter weekend complete with an Easter egg hunt with Steve and Bonnie and her extended family. All of us brought candy and the men hid it while we held the children back. It was fun to see the kids running

around gathering the candy in their baskets. It was hidden well enough that it took some time and effort to find them and that added to the fun. We went to their home for lunch and that afternoon we attended the cantata written by Bonnie's aunt (Cecelia Benson) and performed in the tabernacle. It was the story of the resurrection put to song, performed by a large choir accompanied by both organ and orchestra. We were amazed at how young everyone in the orchestra was! The choir had some amazing voices and we thoroughly enjoyed the whole event.

I had spent several hours during the week preparing for my talk for sacrament meeting but it was good to have a little while Saturday night when I could polish it off. It was such a relief when both my talk and lesson were over. Becky had us come for dinner later that afternoon and it made for a nice day.

While we were in Logan, I had a chance to visit with Jean Benson. She inquired about Andrea and suggested that perhaps the doctor might be more willing to get her in if they approached him with more urgency. She said that when Morris needed his back surgery they were put on a schedule for several months in the future. She finally went in and pleaded her case with the doctor himself and they found a way to move the date ahead. When I called to talk it through with Andrea later, she told me that David had gone into the doctor's office with the x-rays and had put some pressure on for the doctor to see her sooner. Monday morning the doctor called after viewing the x-rays and moved her date up two weeks. It isn't ideal but it is better than before. In the meantime, they are all working together to help Andrea get through this tough time.

Chet received word last week that he has received a promotion and will be the vice president over the western region. Whereas he was previously one of 21 directors, he is now one of 5 regional vice presidents. It leaves their Korean adventure up in the air. His boss hasn't really explained just what he is expecting with that so they may be putting it on hold.

Laurel sent an e-mail informing us that John's thesis won an international competition and he has been invited to Scotland in September to present it, accompanied by his faculty advisor from BYU. He is going to have to get permission from Ford before he responds since he will be so new on the job. It's quite an honor for him and

came as a surprise since he didn't have much time or preparation into his project before submitting it.

Spring has finally arrived (again) and we were able to get some more work done in the yard for home evening. Daddy is leaving about one this afternoon to catch his ride to the recognition dinner in Salmon. Last week he was in Star Valley and next week will be the final one at Jackson Hole on Friday night. It is going to be somewhat of a marathon to try to get back from Provo that afternoon and arrive at Jackson by early evening. Luckily, this will be the last and he will have his evenings free in the coming months. Every time we work in the yard, I get this euphoric feeling realizing that we will be here all summer and able to take care of things. It seems like the last four years have been hit and miss with yard and garden and we are hoping to do better with Daddy around.

[Dad] Last week I got Perry Hawker to underwrite the printing of the Recognition Night program. It was interesting to find out that he is expanding to Arco with a new funeral home out there. My boss was on his honeymoon with his new wife and wasn't available for my weekly review with him. I visited with a couple of great prospects in Star Valley. One of them had recently been released as Stake President and is going to be a mission president in NW Washington—from Everett north. It was fun to visit with him and to reminisce about Mount Vernon and our six weeks there after we graduated from the "Y." There are some wonderful people in Star Valley and a lot of great Scouters. I am always impressed with the goodness of people wherever I go in this council.

One of the people I visited with talked about the farm economy. He said that when he arrived in the valley there were around 1200 dairy farms and that there are about 550 now. He said, based on the value of farm production, the value of farm land should be around \$2-300 per acre. Because of the outsiders (such as movie stars) buying property there the prices are closer to \$10-12,000 per acre or higher if wooded hills and streams are involved.

Last week, I dropped by Dad's and found that Alva Lu had gone to the mall to walk and he was home alone and we had a great visit. I sure love my Dad! I also love and appreciate Alva Lu for taking such good care of him. At my Estate Planning Council meeting in Pocatello today Kent Kunz and Evan Frasure were reporting on the Idaho Legislative

session and what had been accomplished in this session with a large surplus. I couldn't help but think about Dad and how many times he had been in the thick of the fray trying to reduce taxes or negotiate compromises.

The day in Logan was a delight. It was truly a delight to participate in both the egg hunt and the cantata. As I looked at pictures of Katie, Sam, and Josh that we got in the mail today—I realized how quickly these grandkids are growing and changing. I enjoy every moment we can be together.

"A family is a deeply rooted tree with branches of different strengths all receiving nourishment from an infinite source. A family is where character is formed, values are learned, ethics are created, and society is preserved. A family is where all members contribute and share, cooperate and work, and accept their responsibilities toward the good of the group. A family is where holidays are celebrated with feasting, birthdays acknowledged with gifts, and thoughts of days gone by kept alive with fond remembrances. A family is where each can find solace and comfort in grief, pleasure and laughter in joy, and kindness and encouragement in daily living. A family is a haven of rest, a sanctuary of peace and most of all, a harbor of love." (author unknown)

April 24, 2001

[Mom] I had planned to work in the yard today but there is a cold wind and I'm holding out for some warmer weather before I venture out. Daddy just left a few minutes ago for work. He is moving slowly since injuring his back last weekend. Saturday we hosted the annual VIP luncheon and he did some heavy lifting as he was preparing the area for the reception. By about 4:30 he was starting to feel crippled up and by the time we completed the reception and loaded the car, he could hardly walk. He came home and took some muscle relaxants and went to bed. Our ward choir was assigned to sing in stake conference yesterday and I knew that if there was any way possible, he needed to be there to support our choir. He managed to get up and dressed and got along pretty well during the conference, but when he came home, he took a four-hour nap. This morning he slept in and left about 10 for Pocatello. He is wearing a back support but just getting ready for work wore him out so I don't know how long he will last.

The scout reception went very well. I spent most of Friday making the chicken salad that I serve on croissants and gathering things together. On

Saturday Daddy taught at the annual merit badge pow-wow, did a part at the activity day for our ward primary, and then we picked up the food that was ordered from Albertsons and Wal-Mart. Daddy spent most of Friday working on our computer making name tags, posters, and framing certificates to be presented during the Saturday program. He was up working on things until quite late Friday night to have his presentations ready for Saturday. It made for a very stressful few days and maybe the combination of the stress and all the lifting was too much.

Our conference yesterday was beautiful. It was nice to sit in the choir seats and look into the faces of the congregation during the meeting. We have such a fine stake and so much strength. SaraKay sat with the Jenks family on the front row. We had to be there at 8:45 to practice so it made for a pretty long morning but she got along fine. We also attended the temple dedication service for the Winter Quarters Temple and felt such a beautiful spirit at that. I don't ever remember President Hinckley being so emotional, but it seemed appropriate in view of the history of the area and the many sacrifices that were made by the saints who lived and died there. It has been such a treat to be a part of both the Palmyra and the Winter Quarters dedications and to look forward to the one in Nauvoo in 2002. What a thrill for those of you who are going to be living close enough to be a part of it!

John and Laurel called Friday and let us know that they bought a home! They were so pleased to find something that fit their needs and to finalize things so it will be ready when they arrive the end of June. It is located in a beautiful area and their back yard opens onto a wooded acreage shared by several of the nearby homes. It has been owned by a couple who took excellent care of it and they have a full basement to expand into if they desire.

Today Andrea is meeting with the specialist. Our prayers are that she will find a solution. We appreciate their frequent phone calls keeping us in touch with her progress.

We are looking ahead to our trip to Provo this week and arranging things so that we can make the most of our time there. Jenny's aunt is hosting a family wedding shower for Paul and Jenny which we will attend following commencement on Thursday. We hope to do some shopping that morning before we get into pictures and commencement. I had totally forgotten that we

would be moving Mike home for his summer job so we are needing to allow for that, too. Friday we have John and Jenny's convocations at 7:30 and Mike's at 10:30. Daddy has to be in Jackson Hole that night by six so we are really going to have things packed and ready to leave Provo immediately after Mike's convocation. We are considering taking two cars in case the logistics get too complicated. Although it is hectic, BYU graduations are some of my favorite times and it is truly a time of thanksgiving and rejoicing. It is wonderful when a good job is awaiting the graduate and the future is looking so bright. Aren't we blessed!

[Dad] Last Tuesday night was the Salmon District Recognition Dinner. There were four of us that drove over together to represent the council. It was a good thing we got there early; we just about did the whole setup for the dinner ourselves. We met some fine people and enjoyed being a part of recognizing a great deal of service to boys and Scouting.

It made for a late night—it was 12:30 by the time I got home. The next day Sue and I had to be up to the temple at 5:45 am for an initiatory assignment. I then went to the Estate Planning Council meeting I have every third Wednesday, had a weekly review with my boss, and then came home. That evening we headed back to Idaho Falls for the open house for Kim (my boss) and his new wife, Cindy. It was a lovely occasion.

I really regret not being able to attend the Saturday meetings of our Stake Conference—but I didn't have any choice. The help that Sue gives to making the VIP reception a reality is beyond price—her chicken salad is famous. I had two classes for my merit badge on Salesmanship with a total of 40 boys. It worked out well and I don't think it was the most boring class at the Pow Wow. I have been a counselor for Salesmanship for 15 years and this is the first time I have ever had any interest in the merit badge.

For the Primary activity day, they were studying the prophets, especially latter-day ones. I was supposed to come into the room and pretend that I was Howard W. Hunter and tell them a story or something. With a brief sketch of his life, a couple of anecdotes, and the story of the bomber at the fireside in Provo in 1993 (which I reviewed with John, because he was there in the midst of that experience) I was able to keep their attention and deliver a short message. It was overwhelming to assume that role in the 1st person and I had a

hard time keeping my emotions under control. After I had delivered my message to the kids, I went back out into the hall and could feel sobs racking my body. It is hard to describe the feelings that swept over me.

Today, we were able to attend a concert of the strings program at the Middle School that SaraKay has been a part of this school year. They did a wonderful job! It was gratifying to see how far those kids had come with just meeting twice a week after school. Coleen Winder has done a masterful job and it looks like it will continue to grow in the Middle School and extend into the Junior High.

I'm excited for the opportunity of attending another BYU graduation. Counting Jenny it will be 21 BYU degrees in our immediate family. You children and your spouses are a blessing and a force for good in your circles of influence.

May 1, 2001

[Mom] I had no sooner sent the family letter out last week when I realized that I had forgotten to mention that Paul was one of five outstanding junior engineering students honored at their year-end banquet. It carried with the honor a \$50 cash award. His Spori award from last year guarantees his tuition will be paid as long as his grades stay where they should. He has struggled this past semester with some of his classes but hopefully he can hang on to the scholarship for his remaining year. We're certainly proud of him!

On Tuesday Daddy and I attended SaraKay's strings concert. This past year, at the prodding of Linnea Hammond, the middle school purchased three cellos and two basses and recruited students who were interested in learning to play them. Two classes of violin were also offered. There was a total of 18 students who signed up for the after-school program. The more advanced violins were taught by Coleen Winder, and Linnea's daughter, Joy, taught the beginner class. Two members of the community orchestra taught the other two instruments so that there were four separate classes taught each Monday and Wednesday. For the concert the entire group played several numbers and it was a thrill to see the progress they had made over the year. The afternoon concert was attended by the other students as well as parents and it was fun to see the respect and response the children gave the performers. There were three Hispanic children in the program and the girl who played the bass had one bass at home on which to practice and one at

the school so she didn't have to lug it back and forth on the bus. Hopefully the program will continue to grow now that it has made a beginning.

SaraKay had been preparing for piano festival on Saturday and has been focusing more on that than the violin. She performed in both the hymns and the solos divisions and received a 98% on her solos and a 99% on hymns. It was a big relief to have that over for another year. We are probably going to take a summer recess from piano and take some private violin lessons during the break. Coleen is trying to find some options for us.

We left Wednesday about five for Salt Lake and spent the night with Grandma Richards. We had time to visit and catch up on family news. She and Grandpa found out that the laser surgery on one of Grandpa's eyes didn't work and he will not regain his sight in that eye. Although he is not able to see much in either eye, he still can see well enough to get around and be quite independent. It is a terrible loss to not be able to read or see small objects but he is making the best of it.

Thursday morning we arrived in Provo and took Paul shopping. We were on a tight schedule since we were all meeting at John and Laurel's for lunch at noon and then going to take graduation pictures before the four o'clock commencement. Steve came from Logan to share the day with us. Bonnie was going to Ricks on Saturday for Kimball's graduation and so they traded off. It was so fun to be together, especially realizing that in the months ahead John, Laurel, and kids and Mike would all be heading east and our times together will be limited. Laurel took a lot of pictures of their trip to Michigan and of their new home and we were pleased to get to see them and share in the excitement! Although it is hard to have them go so far away, they were pleased with the area and look forward to putting down some roots. Their home is beautiful and even fully decorated and landscaped. It sure makes the years of sacrifice worth it.

It's always a thrill to participate in BYU graduation. The trees on campus were absolutely gorgeous with white and pink blossoms and the lawns were lush and green. The grounds were groomed to perfection. The campus, with the mountains as a backdrop, was inspiring and despite the heavy traffic and hectic schedules, the experience was rejuvenating. The speeches and musical numbers were so amazing and I came away in awe. (as I always do.)

Prior to commencement, we sat in the Marriott and watched on the TV screens as the graduates were videotaped coming through the tunnel adjacent to the Marriott Center. It was like a sea of black flowing robes and caps and the sight was thrilling.

Laurel and I juggled Emma and James for a while in the Marriott Center but they were restless so eventually we took them outside and Laurel pushed them in the stroller to keep them happy. I traded her off a while later and then we played on the lawn and did anything else we could to keep them occupied. The services were nearly 2 1/2 hours long so we were all worn out by the time the graduates came streaming out of the building. Luckily, we had taken pictures before commencement and so we were able to get our group together and head back to John and Laurel's apartment without delay.

That evening we attended an enjoyable party at Jenny's Aunt Julie's home and enjoyed an outdoor barbeque and visiting with both sides of Jenny's family. They are a wonderful group of people and we certainly felt at home. Paul and Jenny got some nice camping equipment for gifts and have already scheduled a time to go camping with Jenny's family in a couple of weeks. Following the party, we had a little while to go over wedding plans and then we returned to spend the night with John and Laurel.

The next morning I took care of Emma and James while Daddy and Laurel attended John's convocation at 7:30. Mike's convocation was at 10:30. Following John's, Daddy came back to the apartment, grabbed a bite to eat, and left for home. He was scheduled to be in Idaho Falls by four to catch his ride to Jackson Hole that night. Mike and Paul spent the morning cleaning out their apartment and packing. After Daddy left, SaraKay and I attended Mike's ceremony in the Wilkinson Center while John and Laurel and family attended a reception for the MBA Graduates. Paul left for Bountiful to be with Jenny's family for her cousin's wedding. By the time we had Mike graduated and the apartment vacated, it was nearly four that afternoon. The car was filled to the brim with the usual conglomeration of household items and even included his dismantled bike. We were a tired and hot bunch by the time we pulled onto the freeway and headed north. Fortunately, we took lots of pictures and in a quieter time and place, we can look at them and have time to get nostalgic about the whole affair! Traffic was horrendous and nearly

bumper-to-bumper from Provo through the Salt Lake area. We had frequent stops and starts and we decided to roll down the windows and turn off the air conditioning to keep the car from heating up. Despite our cramped and crowded condition, we enjoyed the trip.

By the time we were close to Bountiful we began to notice a slight hesitation in the car whenever Mike would accelerate. The further we went, the more noticeable it became. We debated whether to continue on or to pull over and phone a "life-line" for help. I figured if worse came to worse, we could call my sister Kathy in the Salt Lake area. We continued on with Mike nursing the car along each time it faltered. At first he drove in the outside lane in case it quit completely and we needed to make a hasty exit to the shoulder of the road. Soon it became apparent that the car did better if we maintained a constant speed instead of hasty accelerations. So, Mike tried to drive in the center lane so that he didn't need to account for incoming traffic at freeway entrances. When we passed Salt Lake we decided to limp along until Layton with the plan to call Aunt Karen if necessary. We continued on. We passed Layton and decided to try to make it to Tremonton where we knew we could call Steve and Bonnie and have them come rescue us if necessary. By Tremonton Mike had pretty much mastered the gas feed so that we had a minimum of jerking, but his leg was developing a cramp so he tried to drive with his left foot which proved to be a real trick and didn't last too long! Tremonton came and went and we carried on, planning that if we could just coax the car up the Malad Summit that we would be able to coast a long way towards Pocatello and then call Becky and Chet to come rescue us if needed. Since it was the inclines that caused us trouble, we tried to get up speed on the down slopes and then utilize that advantage on the hills. It made for an interesting ride. We would pass slower cars on the slopes and then move into the outside lane as we approached the uphill slopes and they would pass us. If we timed it wrong and tried to pass as we were moving into a climb, we would ride along beside the other vehicle and then lose power and slip back behind them. I'm sure several of them thought we were nuts but we were just trying to keep things together and make it home. When we reached the summit of Malad Pass we were ecstatic! We coasted downhill for several miles and SaraKay reminded me that just a few months ago, we had made that same trip from the pass to the next truck stop in our pickup in the middle of the night with no headlights and praying all the

way that we would be able to coast to the next exit and get help.

Well, to complete the story, the car seemed to improve as we neared Pocatello and by the time we reached Blackfoot, it seemed to be perfectly fine. Now you may draw your own conclusions about this miraculous recovery. I suspect that we may have been dealing with vapor lock since it was such a hot day and the driving conditions in Utah were so labored. We may have gotten some bad gas. I'm not sure just what to make of it. Maybe the car, with mileage now in excess of 200,000 miles, just didn't have the "umph" to make such a strenuous trip. One person even suggested that it took the clean Idaho air to cure it, but your guess is as good as mine. But, nevertheless, in our prayers that night we did express our heartfelt thanks for our safe arrival and His tender watch care over us.

Saturday Daddy finished teaching his course at the scout pow-wow and I helped teach the new trading post directors for the upcoming summer camps. Paul and Jenny arrived about four and we spent a delightful weekend with them, honing wedding plans and just relaxing.

Mike got unloaded and spent the day unpacking, sorting, discarding, and trying to decide what goes to Iowa, what goes into the storage room for the next four years, and what goes to DI. He said that he lay awake Friday night reminiscing about his departure from BYU and it hit him that he wouldn't be going back there another fall. He truly has loved the BYU experience!

Paul and Jenny left last night since Jenny starts her new job today and Paul starts into classes tomorrow. Mike is at work at the site and I'm home here with a slight headache but a feeling of gratitude for our successful week and the Lord's blessings to us. Several of you are facing some challenges that need our combined prayers. Andrea is scheduled May 14th for surgery. Steve's company has laid off 40% of their employees and there may be more layoffs coming depending on if technology rebounds in the next few months. It's a frightening prospect for their family but Steve is full of faith and keeping his eye on possible alternatives if changes come. Becky and Chet are up in the air regarding Korea and trying to get a time line on that and Steph and Linds are continuing to show their home and pray for a buyer despite the depressed market.

[Dad] I, too, was thrilled with BYU graduation experiences and the family time we had this past

week. We were particularly touched by the message of Tom Lantos, a Senator from California and survivor of the holocaust who was given an honorary Doctorate degree. At John's convocation I was impressed with the number of graduates who were returned missionaries and the number that spoke two or more languages. What a force they will be as they go out into the world and "leaven the loaf."

When I went to Jackson, I found out that there had been a movement to not allow me to make my endowment presentation because of fear of asking too much of the Scouters in Jackson—but cooler minds prevailed and no one was put off by my presentation. It is ironic that Jackson has a major fundraising project of gathering antlers on the Elk Refuge and then auctioning them off. Most of the money goes back to the Refuge for feed and equipment, but they write a check for their District's FOS share each year and never have a grass roots campaign asking anyone for money. There is probably more money in the Jackson District than the rest of the council.

Sunday night we had a bi-stake youth fireside with Elder Rolland Walker from Idaho Falls, an Area Authority Seventy. He was mission president in Chile. He spoke about missionary work and the importance of "being tough" and working hard enough to see miracles. Mike went with me and went up and spoke with him after. We were both touched by the stories of miracles and couldn't help thinking of the miracles Tim has seen and the evidence there of great faith and hard work.

May 7, 2001

[Mom] Yesterday in testimony meeting Richard Tominaga started his testimony by commenting on the blustery and cold weather we had been experiencing for several days. He said that it had about worn him out by the time the wind finally quit blowing. I could identify with his feelings although I'm not a farmer who has to work out in the cold every day like he does. It seemed like there was only one day all last week when the wind wasn't raging, and that includes the nights, too. It really got to me and by the time Friday arrived, I was ready to pull up stakes and move. This time of year, when there is so much to be done outside, it is frustrating to battle the weather. Fortunately, this week started out better and prospects for getting our garden going and some flowers planted are looking hopeful.

Mike is enjoying his work at the INEEL. Since his clearance has already come through, he has been

able to start right into his summer's work. He catches the site bus at 5:50 a.m. and arrives home at 6:30 p.m. Mon-Thur. It leaves him a long weekend and he has already started affiliating with the ISU crowd and is attending his ward there. He spent several hours last week car hunting. He's shopped on line also and has a pretty good feel for what to expect price-wise.

Part of my week was spent in session with the county commissioners regarding a situation which has developed with land use. Two years ago a resident of Riverside tried to get a building permit to add a bedroom on to their home and discovered that he had to have a special use permit since much of the area was zoned MI which is light manufacturing. This discovery brought a wave of protest from residents in the surrounding area whose residences were also zoned the same. It was further discovered that the appropriate measures had not been followed when the area was changed from Agriculture/Residential to MI and consequently home owner's property was gradually being devalued because businesses were coming in, buying up farm ground and putting in businesses that were totally incompatible with residential use.

A committee was formed and lawyers hired and petitions gathered but the old commission never resolved it. Now there is a new commission and last week the homeowners around where Janet Wray lives discovered that the property adjacent to their homes has been sold to a fellow who is going to put in a gravel pit, diesel shop, and open hot asphalt pit!

Although all of this is happening two miles down the road from us, it still is a grave concern and I attended the initial meeting with other homeowners to issue a protest. By the time the week was over, there had been numerous meetings held with both sides of the issue. Finally, the commissioners issued a moratorium on the area, prohibiting any building for 90 days until it can be ironed out. The bad news is that the gravel pit will probably still be permitted since the permit was previously given. What a mess! Before the week was over, the entire planning and zoning board had resigned.

I continue to be grateful that 20 years ago when we were looking for a building lot, we chose this location. We are zoned Agricultural/Residential and with the furor in the county regarding these issues, I think it would be a major task to change it in the years to come. It is sad that other

homeowners who have built homes and improved them with lovely yards and gardens are finding that their investment will be devalued and they can do little to stop it. It is so critical that when you build or buy, you check on zoning and location and try to do all you can to locate where this kind of thing won't impact you.

Although my involvement with this last week was minimal, I came away thinking about my duties and privileges as an American citizen. Had I joined a protest group in many countries in the world today, I would be jeopardizing my standing in the community and my safety.

One of the highlights of my week was my second presentation on the Family Life merit badge to the ward scouts. A month ago I made the first presentation and had five boys there to begin their work on it. Well, over the course of the month, several other boys have jumped on board and Tuesday night I had five scouts, two one-year scouts, and five teacher age boys show up! It was such a fun experience to teach and then work with each of them individually on their progress. I wore my scout costume (as I call it) (Dad always corrects me and reminds me that it is a uniform) and felt very official. These next few weeks I'll be working to prod the boys along and hopefully get it finished off.

[Dad] I have had a Merit Badge experience lately also. I think I mentioned previously about being the counselor for Salesmanship for 15 years and never having the chance to help anyone with that merit badge until this year and I had forty boys in my classes at the Pow Wow. I had them do a sales project of selling popcorn if they didn't have another project. They ended up selling over \$1500.00 worth of popcorn in one week. The popcorn came in on Friday and I have had to sort it out according to the individuals and their orders and notify them that it is in and for them to deliver it and bring the money back to complete their merit badge.

Saturday I was in a Wood Badge staff development all day. We have a wonderful staff and I am excited about working together. I had a presentation to make on high performance teams and their characteristics. Mike helped me with the Power Point presentation to accompany my discussion. It went very well and I felt good about how things turned out. We are working hard on recruiting for our course in August and hope to be able to get a full course. With the changes in Wood Badge, it is a lot more focused on

leadership skills and developing leadership than on outdoor skills.

Friday, we were in the Temple with Ryan Hansen and Becca Nelson as they were married and then went to a wedding brunch held at the Sandpiper in Idaho Falls. They are a beautiful couple and it helped to psych us up for Paul and Jenny's wedding.

May 14, 2001

[Mom] I've had Andrea in my thoughts and prayers today. She is scheduled to have surgery today at two and then will spend the balance of the day and night in the hospital. If all goes well, she will be released tomorrow and return home. Her mother arrived Saturday and will spend this next week with her until she is doing better. Although the hospital stay won't be long, it will be several months before she is able to do her normal activities. David said that Laurel and Angela have been good to help out and that "Mum Laurel" has certainly been invaluable. Chantelle is a contented baby and the main challenge is Joseph who is just at that age where he has a lot of energy and doesn't quite understand just what is going on with all of this. I'll keep you posted on their situation once the surgery is completed.

We enjoyed the opportunity to have Steve and Bonnie here as well as Becky and children for dinner on Saturday evening. Bonnie's family had a gathering on Saturday to bless Joel and Kim's new baby and since they were already coming for that we decided to take advantage and have a little Mother's Day dinner and get-together that evening. Chet was out of town but Becky brought the kids and we had a short but sweet time together. The weather cooperated and the kids played in the back yard.

It's been nice this summer to have Mike around for some of these activities. His work schedule permits him to be here for weekends and evenings and it has been an added treat to include him. He and Daddy spent the morning on Saturday at a dealership in Rexburg buying a car. Mike has been checking the internet and the Thrifty Nickel for cars and he spotted one on Friday which looked promising. Daddy and I were leaving at six for Island Park so we stopped on our way to see it and then Saturday morning he and Daddy went to Rexburg for a test drive. Before the morning was over, he was the proud owner of a forest green Toyota Tercel. It's nice to have that decision made and know that he has wheels to get him through his dental school years.

Daddy and I went to Island Park Friday evening because I was speaking at the Moreland 3rd Ward's Relief Society retreat. I tried to figure out a way to get there without involving Daddy and SaraKay since it would be such a long trip and consume the entire evening. The cabin where the retreat was held was on Bill's Island and I worried about finding my way in the dark in the mountains alone. I tried to catch a ride with some other women from the ward but most of them were going up that morning and I didn't want to give it a full day. I tried to find a ride with another bunch that were leaving about 6 p.m. but they were spending the night and I didn't want to do that either. Daddy suggest that he and SaraKay take me but we were babysitting Angela Winder while her mother went to Salt Lake and I knew she and SaraKay would be pretty bored spending four hours coming and going. Anyway, we finally decided to get a sitter for the two girls and have Daddy chauffeur me. It turned out to be a lovely occasion and a fun trip for us although we didn't arrive home until midnight.

We had a chance last night to visit with Grandpa Larsen and Alva Lu. Alva Lu was sustained yesterday as the new Relief Society president in their ward and has spent a busy week deciding on counselors. She has been a president before as well as a stake RS president so she knows how busy it is, but I think she is pleased with the calling now that she is not in the temple every day. They are still debating about moving to a different condo in the complex and that decision is weighing on them.

One of the highlights of the weekend was our Mother's Day call from Tim. Thursday night while I was at Enrichment meeting, he called to line up the time on Sunday when he would be at a residence with a phone. We finally got through to him last night at 8:45 and we enjoyed the visit. He seemed upbeat and optimistic. He is in one of the poorest areas in his mission and regularly tracts out people who live in structures that are hardly recognizable as homes. They have no electricity or indoor plumbing and many are just a glorified shack. He says he cannot imagine living like some of the people have to. The Elders have a little nicer apartment than most of the people they teach, but most of their appointments are with these extremely poor people. There has been a lot of hatred of the Mormons in the town where he is serving and they have been the object of some persecution although he said that he hasn't ever felt threatened physically. He is enjoying his

companion and they seem to work well together. Their mission will be getting a new president in July so he suspects he will not be transferred for several months. It was so good to hear his voice and have a chance to find out how he is doing. He has enjoyed good health and says the language is coming along.

I need to close and get some yard work done today. The sun is shining, but as is the case most of the time, the wind is blowing and ruining a perfectly good spring day. Love, Mom

[Dad] Mom has been fasting today for Andrea and we were sure grateful to get the call from Dave at 5:30 that all was well. Any time you go under a surgeon's knife it is a little scary and definitely traumatic to the body and psyche. Yesterday was a sweet Mother's Day. I appreciate all you kids being so faithful about touching base via phone, cards, gifts, etc. Your Mother certainly deserves all the recognition she gets! After she spoke in Island Park on Friday night and we were leaving the cabin, Bishop Grimmett commented to me, "I hope you know what a treasure you have there." I do. And I thank the Lord every day for her and the love and support she gives me and each of my children and the wisdom and patience she manifests in the day-to-day crises.

I read an article about Raising a Moral Child that referred to some materials by Barbara Lewis, a national award-winning author and educator. She listed attributes of a moral child elementary school age: Caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, forgiveness, honesty, relationships, respect, responsibility, and safety. For secondary school age add the following: getting to know yourself, positive attitudes, choice and accountability, cleanliness, communication, conservation, courage, creativity, empathy, endurance, health, imagination, integrity, justice, leadership, loyalty, peacefulness, problem solving, purpose, self-discipline, and wisdom. As adults we need to look at this list ask ourselves, "What do I SAY about these concepts and values? What do I DO with regard to them?"

What do I ENCOURAGE in my children? What contacts and connections do I create with sincere sources of these values?" The author states that raising a moral child includes guiding our children to act in the world in a constructive, creative, common sense way. *"Doing for and with others,"* is a shorthand way of summarizing powerful social influences that reinforce many values from Barbara Lewis's list.

I thought that Mrs. Lewis's action priorities were very interesting. "1- Set a good example. (Be attentive of subtle messages you send—especially mixed messages.) 2- Spend time with your kids. (especially time talking—listening). 3- Plan a weekly activity. (Planning and following through is a powerful moral lesson in and of itself) 4- Have problem-solving discussions. (Family councils looking at problems and finding solutions together—organization, chores, problems, transportation, etc.) 5- Accentuate the positive. (Help kids see and appreciate the positive things in their lives and the world around them.) 6- Encourage and reward service in your family. (Let children help out with household tasks—giving them opportunities for service, acts of kindness, caring, and responsibility.) 7- Discover and help develop children's interests. (Having an area of competence and feeling good about themselves promotes tolerance, fairness, and caring.)"

May 22, 2001

[Dad] Last Tuesday I had Carolyn Edlund from the regional office here for some appointments. We had a couple of good appointments but no \$5 million gift. That night, Sue and I went to the Red Lobster for the annual end of the year meeting of the Pocatello Estate Planning Council. We thoroughly enjoyed the dinner out without having to pick up the tab.

Wednesday, I had the opportunity of going to Island Park Scout Camp with a gentleman who is desirous of putting a cell tower up at the camp to cover some holes in the service of Edge Wireless in the area. It would be a 150-foot tower. Installation would require running power to it and at the same time to the rifle range and the COPE area of camp. They would pay a monthly lease that would be helpful for the camp. It looks very promising.

Thursday night was the Executive Board Meeting for the Council and I had a brief training presentation regarding endowment. We also discussed and promoted the upcoming Scouting Heritage Society Dinner event. We are planning a Dutch oven dinner at the Fort Hall Replica at Ross Park in Pocatello, a tour of the fort, and a short business meeting as a part of the event.

Friday I met with my vice president over Endowment—Steve Parry and two representatives from the LDS Foundation to plan our upcoming professional seminar in September that we are co-sponsoring for CPA's, Attorney's, etc. Through the

discussion we decided to open it up for sponsorship from all charities in the area.

Saturday involved spraying trees for a couple of diseases we are seeing in them this year and then going with three other Wood Badgers to Treasure Mountain Scout Camp to map out the location for the various aspects and events of our course coming up in August.

Sunday was a busy day starting with YM presidency meeting at 7:00 a.m., meeting with the Stake Presidency, our meeting block, home teaching, YM/YW Correlation meeting, and a fireside. We decided to try something new this year with an Aaronic Priesthood Commemoration Fireside for all the Aaronic Priesthood in the stake and their fathers. President Mark Nelson, who served as the President of the Spain Madrid Mission was our speaker and did a great job! Mike and SaraKay helped me with refreshments while I took care of the rest of the set-up and getting things off and rolling. President Nelson had some slides he had taken in Spain showing a shepherd leading his flock of sheep, his wife as a sheepherder trying to drive some sheep, and a shepherd leaving the flock to get a lost lamb. They really helped to give visual images of the Savior and the environment of much of his message.

He talked about the meanings of "saber" vs. "conocer" in regard to knowing the Savior. He also shared his description of 12 characteristics of prepared missionaries-- whether they be young or old. 1) *Love of Savior and Heavenly Father and having a relationship with them.* 2) *Love of fellowmen.* 3) *"For the Lord I Will!"* 4) *Testimony.* 5) *Appreciation and knowledge of Atonement.* 6) *Love of Gospel.* 7) *Appreciation of family and its heritage.* 8) *Love of scriptures.* 9) *Sensitive to spirit.* 10) *Obedient.* 11) *Relate to others--kind, caring, giving.* 12) *Hard work, experience, and enjoyment.*

[Mom] We have been so busy that we haven't had time to rehearse all the things Daddy mentioned in his letter and so I was glad for the update. He has not only been busy with his work and church responsibilities, but he has been helping me with yard and garden and the wedding details. I don't know how I would manage without him.

Andrea is recovering nicely from the surgery. She can already feel some relief from the chronic pain she was experiencing even though she is recovering from the surgery. The doctor said that the situation with her tail bone was worse than he had realized and that she probably would have

continued having problems for the rest of her life if the problem hadn't been addressed now. It is such a relief for them to have the surgery done and look forward to better times. Her mother is a true "angel of mercy" and has made the entire experience do-able despite the demands of their young family.

We had a wonderful weekend with Paul and Jenny. They arrived Friday night and stayed until Sunday afternoon. They brought the wedding announcements, pictures, etc. and Saturday morning Jenny and Paul pretty much got them stuffed and ready to go. Daddy has been compiling the addresses on the computer and last night we got them printed out. It's amazing how many changes there have been in our guest list for Paul's wedding as compared to the two weddings we had four years ago.

Daddy and I often comment that we feel so blessed to have the wonderful in-laws we do. Each son or daughter-in-law brings a new dimension, new talents and strength to our family. Mike will be flying to CA this weekend to get better acquainted with Valerie and spend some time with the Bennion's. He is pretty excited about getting to go to the Monterrey aquarium and see the beautiful beaches. We appreciate Steph and Linds being host (again).

May 29, 2001

[Dad] We just got home from a day in Salt Lake with family at Jimmie's wedding. It was wonderful!!! He has married an Angel--yes, that is her name and it is readily apparent that he is head over heels in love. Dad and Alva Lu stayed at the Kimball so they could be there. Gary and Linda, Staff and Kathy, Jeanie, and Karen were all at the wedding. The fellow who performed the sealing was Ned Winder. He had a wonderful sense of humor and was so personal and gave such good advice to them. As he performed the sealing, he had the parents sit together--husbands and wives--so that they could watch their child during the ceremony. It was really unique and a nice touch. We walked through the gardens around the Church Office Building and the fountains and reflecting pool where East Temple used to be. It is such a beautiful and colorful site. Karen said she and her young women had spent some time on the flower beds as a service project. We were pleased to see Aunt Kathy's parents, the Wakefields, her two younger sisters, and some other relatives and friends. It was also sweet to have Jennifer and CoCo in the temple for the

sealing. They both looked so good and had a sweet spirit about them.

After the sealing we went to the Lion House for a wonderful dinner. Christian joined us there during his lunch hour and Ashley joined with Gary and Linda. We had the best visit and reveled with the sweet time with family. We are even more excited about what is happening to our family next month and looking forward to the gathering. We left this morning around 6:40 and drove down. On the way home we went through Wellsville and spent a couple of hours with Bonnie and kids. It was a timely visit because Steve had flown out last night for Florida and was going to be gone all week. Hopefully, our visit broke up the loneliness.

Yesterday was a full day of yard work. I sprayed weeds and fertilized trees. It is rewarding to watch the dandelions curl up and DIE!! We went to the cemetery on Sunday night with Becky and Chet and had a sweet time there despite the wind. Saturday was another full day of yard work and clean up. It is incredible how much work it takes to keep things ship-shape around here. But everything we do we are thinking of the wedding and how things will look. One of the biggest projects of mine for last week was designing announcements, printing them up, updating address files, and getting everything in the mail inviting donors and board to the annual Heritage Society Event.

[Mom] We truly enjoyed the holiday weekend although most of it was spent doing yard work. SaraKay had a friend spend the night Friday and they slept out on the trampoline. Saturday they played at Karina's for several hours in the afternoon and that gave us time to get even more projects done around the yard. Today was very enjoyable but we're both tired and ready for bed. Mike is due home from his California trip about nine so we're hoping to get the scoop from him on how his weekend went. We appreciated Steph and Linds hosting him and showing him a good time. I'm sure that Mike about went nuts at the Monterrey Aquarium! He has always loved that kind of stuff. We are also wondering how things turned out with Valerie.

June 5, 2001

[Mom] We've had unusually cold weather the last few days and I'm sitting here at the computer wearing a turtle neck sweater and a flannel vest and I'm still cold. Last night we worked in the garden and decided to put on the sprinklers just in case it froze. This morning there was frost

everywhere except where the sprinkler was running so we were grateful we had taken that precaution. I've already had the tomato plants reduced to rubble once this spring by frost and I wasn't sure they would make it through a second time.

Life is hectic but rewarding. Mike arrived home from California tired but glad that he had gone. He had a great time with Valerie but things are up in the air and he's not quite sure how she is feeling or what she is thinking. He thoroughly enjoyed his time with the Bennion's. They were very gracious hosts and took him to see Monterrey beach, the aquarium, and other sites. His favorite was the tide pools. He has had such a fascination with "creatures" all his life and took a herpetology class his last semester at BYU. Being able to see the ocean and spend time on the beach was truly a dream come true for him. Thanks, Steph, Linds, and kids for showing him such a great time!

Becky left Friday about noon for Utah. She and the kids were flying to New York with Chet's parents for a five-day vacation. Chet was going to join them in New York on Saturday. We haven't heard from them yet, but no news is good news so we haven't been too concerned.

John completed his thesis and now has a couple of weeks to finish up his class work and then defend his thesis on the 20th. They are getting so anxious to get the move made! They had a new family move in upstairs this week and it has put an end to them having the use of the second apartment downstairs for James' bed. They have really enjoyed having the home to themselves for the last several months and it was also nice for us when we visited for graduation to have a separate bathroom and sleeping quarters.

Shauntel, Randy, and Camille are flying in to Salt Lake on the 15th and will be spending time with Randy's family while they gather to celebrate Taggart's return from a mission. They will join us for our festivities for the rest of their stay and we will drive them to the airport the Sunday following the wedding. It doesn't seem possible that they have just two years left of residency. Randy has been approached about taking an additional year to specialize further and that is under consideration.

Katie turns 12 this week and is joining her mother in the Young Women's program. She has been excited about this and anxious to take this important step. I still remember when Steph

started going to mutual for the first time. It is the beginning of an exciting time of life!

Paul and Jenny were here for the weekend and we had a good session discussing the final details of the wedding. It is such a treat having them here. Paul is moving into their Provo apartment this week and he and another fellow will room together until the newlyweds are ready to move in. The apartment is just down the street from John and Laurel's. It is interesting that Paul and Jenny's first Sunday in their new ward will be one week after John and Laurel move to Michigan. They both wish that they could have had a little overlap. Paul is taking a full load this summer and will have his finals on Thursday, the day of the wedding dinner. When classes start this fall, he will be well into his final year and Jenny will commute to her job in Salt Lake. Paul will be taking his graduate school exams the end of the summer and then they will start the process of deciding where to go from there. We are so grateful that these opportunities are available to them.

Andrea's mother returned to Provo Friday and Andrea is handling things on her own now. I'm sure that she is relieved when David arrives home each evening from work and can lend a hand. Laurel and Angela have been good to help out, too. We are excited to see Chantelle again and have the chance to participate in her blessing the Sunday following the wedding.

When I called Bonnie to go over some changes in wedding plans, I could hear the children in the background and Bonnie commented that it was the first day of summer vacation. It is always a challenge to shift gears when summer arrives and put aside the routine of school and try to have some semblance of routine despite the long daylight hours, church and family outings, neighborhood children omnipresent, and other summer activities. Now that I'm down to one (I mean two) children at home, summer isn't nearly as difficult for me as it used to be when I was cooking three meals a day for 12 of us. Those certainly were busy times; in no way do I consider them the "good ol' days!

[Dad] Today I worked in Idaho Falls, had a good meeting with Steve Parry and Kim, my boss; also, met with Roger Dye and finished up his James E West Fellowship. The secretary in Idaho Falls lost her RSVP list for the Heritage Society event at the Fort Hall Replica this Saturday, so I have started calling everyone--that is only 200 phone calls!

Yesterday we had an all-day staff meeting in Pocatello. We held it there because it has air conditioning and the IF office doesn't. But it was so cold, we didn't need the air conditioning--and we found out it was out of commission if we had needed it. Sunday was a quiet day and I studied the gospel almost all morning. The Stake Presidency had asked us to dedicate our fast to the missionary program.

I had a Wood Badge Staff Meeting and training all day Saturday. I stayed up late Friday night preparing the charts and flip chart that I needed for my presentation and Paul and Jenny tried to help me with recording segments from "Cool Runnings" that illustrated the four leadership styles I was discussing. My presentation went over very well. Robert had asked me to bring my chainsaw to cut down the trees in back of the Scout Office that had taken over the sidewalk and blocked out the views from the office windows. I spent about an hour cutting down and cutting up the trees and then it took Robert and Dan Marley the rest of the day and seven pickup loads to haul it all away.

Let me conclude with a quote from John D. Rockefeller III: "The road to happiness lies in two simple principles: Find what it is that interests you and that you can do well, and when you find it, put your whole soul into it--every bit of energy and ambition and natural ability you have."

[Mom] Just as a reminder, the Richards will be going to a water park on Wednesday, June 20th with a dinner at a park that evening at 6:00 followed by visiting. Jenny has chosen to have a dinner/dance the evening before the wedding instead of a reception and so it will be a little different as far as when and where we will need you to be. On Thursday, June 21st the Cutlers are hosting this event at a church near their home in Bountiful. The exact address will be included in your wedding invitation. This dinner will be for adults and will include a short program and dance.

The next morning the wedding ceremony will be at 9:15 in the Bountiful Temple. Sister Cutler has offered to let any of the children who would like to, come to her home and be babysit during the temple ceremony but I know that there is also a waiting room at the temple and if the weather is nice, the children could walk around outside until the wedding is over and it's time for pictures. Jenny has a photographer who will be taking pictures at the temple. They will first get pictures

of the large group, including children and then when the group pictures are and Paul and Jenny will have their turn.

My plan is to leave immediately following the wedding and head for home. There are a lot of things in the works right now that could alter things including if Steph and Linds are still in California, moving, or in Utah. With the change of employment, David has very limited time off and they are trying to work around that situation. We recognize that each of you will have to do the best you can and Paul and Dad and I will understand. Friday afternoon at about 4:30 I am hosting a buffet supper here at the home place.

All of you are invited as are the Cutlers that will be traveling that day. I would like everyone to plan to be to the reception at Riverside by 6:30 for some pictures. I haven't worked out the details on what I am doing with that but probably we will eat at 4:30 and allow time for the children to change into their Sunday best. I hope to have some sort of boutonniere for the boys and floral barrette for the girls.

Friday afternoon at about 4:30 I am hosting a buffet supper here at the home place. All of you are invited as are the Cutlers.

I haven't figured out everything yet but I am figuring out who will be taking gifts and other tasks at the reception. I would like the boys to be dressed in white with dark pants. The little girls I would like to be dressed in a Sunday dress that has some of the colors in it that are included in the swatch. Ideally, the night of the reception, you siblings will be free to supervise the children but also to have time to mix and mingle with the guests.

Saturday we will have pictures taken in the back yard. We will have lunch and spend the day together ending with a Dutch oven dinner that evening. Saturday morning we will have some family activities including horseback riding and a wiener roast.

June 12, 2001

[Mom] It's blowing outside (again!) and I've decided to take a little reprieve from weeding the garden and get this letter started. It seems like we have had more wind this spring than I ever remember in years past. SaraKay and I braved the gale this morning and manned our hoes anyway, but after a couple hours we came in for a break. SaraKay starts a basketball camp today; it runs

for two hours Monday-Thursday of this week. She was excited to go.

It has been nearly a month since we have heard anything from Tim. He has been so faithful to write and we have been asked to use a TX address so we are a little puzzled at why his letters aren't getting through. He expressed in his last letter that because they were getting a new president, he didn't think he would be transferred for several months. We miss hearing from him and have even considered calling the mission home but Mike thought that we should give it a little more time before we sounded an alarm.

[Dad] It was a real treat to have John and Laurel and family here over the weekend. We took advantage of John's presence to help us with a musical number in sacrament meeting Sunday. He, Sue, and I sang "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" with SaraKay playing a violin solo for the 3rd verse and accompanying us on the last verse. It turned out very well. John was also a great help to me in hauling chairs and tables to and from the Fort on Saturday. That event was preceded for me by a full day of training new District leaders called "Blue Badge Training." It involved the full professional staff and we had nearly 150 people there for the day of training—a great success.

Sunday night was the Eagle Court of Honor for Jacob. It was a great occasion and a wonderful court of honor. Rick and Terry were pleased to have around 70 people there. Jacob had worked for me at camp for a summer and we had gotten quite close, so he had me give the Eagle Charge and also give out the awards. Rick and Gary and I sang "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies" and we really sounded great together except for the first part of a verse that I forgot I was supposed to sing the melody. Gary played Taps on his harmonica while the flag was carried out and it was a nice touch.

At the Heritage Society Event we gathered at the Fort Hall Replica at Ross Park in Pocatello. It is a fascinating collection of historical artifacts and information about life in the last half of the 19th century. At 5:00 pm I had three former camp staff members in uniform lower the flag (while I bugled) and then we had the Dutch oven dinner and a brief program. My Endowment VP volunteer that I work with, Steve Parry, conducted and did a great job. He talked about the source of the name Fort Hall. It was built by a man named Wyeth and Hall was his partner and put up the money. He drew an analogy of how in Scouting we are very much like

that expedition—with some who are the workers and others who provide the finances for the work to go on.

June 20, 2001

[Dad] The last little while has really been hectic as we have tried to anticipate everything for the coming reunions and wedding and get everything done that could be done ahead of time. We are excited to be able to see so much family over the next few days and hope we can just have some meaningful time with each of you. As Sue has carefully planned structured every day and itemized out everything that had to be done and bought and cut up and prepared and frozen and taken there and brought back and everything, I couldn't help but think that we each should be so meticulous in our planning and preparations for when "the Bridegroom cometh." The Sunday School lesson on Sunday was about the Second Coming and I mentioned the above analogy and got a laugh as I mentioned all the preparations for Paul's wedding—at least we know the timing of when that bridegroom cometh.

Monday night I stayed in Pocatello a couple hours longer and helped with a Rotary project of selling ducks for the annual Duck Race to benefit the Portneuf Greenway. It was interesting to stand outside of Albertson's and sell ducks. Father's Day was special; I appreciated all you kids did to make contact and remember me in some way. Cards, calls, and kisses are all deeply appreciated—as well as books, ties, money, socks, slacks, and Bluebird chocolates.

Saturday, we received a call from Karen—she was staying with Dad and Alva Lu for the weekend, Jim was fishing, and she wondered if she could come visit and bring Dad. We had such a delightful brief visit with them and I so enjoyed the time with her and Dad. I can't believe how her kids are growing up!

Last weekend was a pre-jamboree campout for the contingent from our council that is leaving in July to go to the National Jamboree in Fort AP Hill in Virginia. We got some good press and TV coverage and are grateful for the relations in this area between the Scouts and the community. I heard somewhere that anyone fighting against the Scouts are fighting against everything good this country stands for and what the founding fathers were looking for in character of its citizens. It is amazing to me how the homosexual issue has polarized so many organizations against us. At work I have been putting together a seminar for

professionals—attorneys, CPA's, and estate planners for September 21st. We have a coalition of charitable organizations in Eastern Idaho to cosponsor this seminar. It has been gratifying to feel the cooperation and support of so many good organizations.

Yesterday, I took off work to help Sue with the preparations for the wedding and this weekend. It was exhausting to work by her side and try to keep up. I am amazed at the energy and perseverance she has to accomplish worthy goals. We had a morning of it again before we head to Salt Lake and the Richards reunion tonight. We are taking my pickup to Logan and Steve is going to try selling it down there—hopefully with a new venue and a more prosperous valley we can get it sold.

[Mom] I appreciated the remembrances in commemoration of Father's Day. We are truly blessed to have Daddy at the head of our home and involved in our lives. His every thought is of fulfilling his responsibilities in an honorable way whether it be in his role as father, employee, church member, community leader, or husband. It is one of life's great blessings to have a worthy priesthood holder at the head of the home. I have been triply (is that a word) blessed to have three such men in my life and to feel of their constant love and concern.

I appreciated Dad's efforts these past few weeks in preparing for the wedding. He has really done a lot of work in the yard to get things spruced up and looking nice. It was especially nice to have him home yesterday helping me finish up the tasks outlined for the day. We commented as we stood shoulder to shoulder working that this was probably how it would be when we serve a mission. We continue to look forward to that time of our lives. Usually a wedding isn't this involved, but coupling the wedding plans with a Richards and a Steve Larsen reunion has complicated things.

Shauntel, Randy, and Camille arrived from Iowa last Friday night and have spent most of the time with Randy's side of the family who is celebrating Taggart's return from a mission. They did drop by Sunday night for a Father's Day visit and we had a delightful time getting reacquainted with Camille and catching up on the news. Mike is especially grateful for the time with them since he has a lot of questions about the University of Iowa and his adventures in the months ahead. Yesterday they dropped by again to help us with last minute details and then Shauntel left with SaraKay and

Camille to attend Maddie's birthday party at the park and zoo. We are looking forward to a few more days together before they wing their way home on Sunday.

I called Jonie for her birthday and we had a good visit. She was in good spirits and they were planning a family outing that evening for her birthday. This will be the first reunion that we haven't had them come and we'll miss seeing them. We have also had Tim on our minds and in our prayers. We suspect that he will be having a few nostalgic moments this week as he thinks about the rest of us gathering. Mike suggested that we make a tape and have everyone say a few words on it. We did that for him during a reunion that he missed and he said that it meant a lot.

June 27, 2001

[Dad] What a thrill it was to be able to have just about the whole family together, and especially to be in the temple together on Friday for Paul and Jennie's wedding. I commented to several of you how that really gives greater meaning to the phrase, "joy and rejoicing in your posterity." It was fun to just hang around and visit on Saturday without feeling any pressures to be going or doing something other than family for the day. It was gratifying to see how much the grandkids enjoyed each other and the back yard. With the workout the trampoline received I was sure glad we had gotten it repaired.

We felt relieved to have as good a crowd as we did on Friday night for the reception. We had a pretty constant flow of people and most of them hung around visiting with the family. It meant a lot to be able to have most of Paul's siblings and their spouses mingling with our friends as they came to the reception. I mentioned last week about Sue's itemized planning to get us through this last week. It was the only reason we were able to do it without a nervous breakdown. After the wedding on Friday in the Bountiful Temple we had pictures at the Cutler's. I am really looking forward to getting the family shots taken by the photographer—I think they will be excellent. We were able to check out of the motel and head for home by 12:30. Everyone pitched in to help make the reception setup and the dinner before a success. The brisket was a hit as usual and we were having such a grand time that Sue had to get everyone's attention at 6:15 and remind us that we had to be over to the church and ready for the reception by 7:00. We barely made it.

Another highlight of the week was the visit to the Legacy Theater and viewing "The Testaments". What a wonderful film portraying the reality of the Savior and His mission on one continent and the struggles to prepare for his appearance on the American continent. It was a moving film that should leave no doubt about our belief in Christ.

Thursday night's wedding dinner with the Cutler's was a delightful evening together. My trumpet solo turned out well, SaraKay played beautifully, John and Paul sang well with a quartet, Mike's comments about Paul were beautifully balanced for the occasion, and Sue's comments helped to add to the ambiance of the evening. We were deeply impressed with the Cutler extended family we met and so appreciative of all the family that was able to be there to share the evening with us.

Wednesday night we had a special time with the Richards family at Kathy and Dick's home. One of the highlights for me was being able to take Arch back to the rest home and get him settled in for the night. I am always impressed with the feeling of calm and peace I get around Arch. Patience and acceptance and faith that what is best will eventually occur seems to pervade the atmosphere around him.

[Mom] It feels good to have last week successfully completed and settle in now for a little less stressful summer. As most of you are aware, Tate, is undergoing some testing this week. He was scheduled on Monday for an MRI but there had been some miscommunication and when Becky arrived at the hospital for the test, she was informed that they thought Tate was a newborn and hadn't scheduled to have the anesthesiologist there to sedate him during the procedure. It was so upsetting for Becky to make all the arrangements for the day and then be sent home without accomplishing what they needed. After a lot of phoning, she was able to reschedule for this morning (Wednesday) and hopefully they will be able to have some answers regarding his situation. At first the doctor thought that he might have a malfunction of the thyroid, but that was ruled out following a blood test that came back normal. It may be several days before the test results come back. Several of you have called expressing concern. We will do all we can to keep everyone posted when the test results are completed. Our prayers are certainly with them in this situation and we have offered to participate in a family fast if they desire it.

We are excited for Paul and Jenny to return from their honeymoon in Yellowstone and Jackson Hole and spend some time with us before going back to Salt Lake and their summer work. Paul is doing an internship and Jenny will resume her regular job. They called Sunday night to let us know that they were having a great time and that they appreciated all we had done to make their wedding such a memorable occasion.

It was wonderful to gather for the wedding. Between the Richards reunion and all the wedding festivities, most of the siblings and their spouses got in some good visiting time. It was fun to see the cousins interacting. I know how important and satisfying these relationships can be. I've always been grateful for the opportunities our family has had on both the Larsen and Richards sides for reunions to keep us in touch with each other. I really appreciated everyone's willingness to travel and make the sacrifices necessary to join us. It becomes such a marathon with little children and long distances. We also appreciate all the help with setting up for the reception and all the work that went in to taking care of meals and clean-up here at home.

Monday morning SaraKay and I spent several hours setting out rose petals from the corsages to dry for potpourri and hanging up flowers from the reception so that they would dry. I was thinking how wild the week had been and how we hadn't really had time to "smell the flowers" until it was over. We truly did enjoy the beautiful aroma of the flowers we brought from Bountiful for the reception and also the corsages. We appreciated all the Cutlers did!

June 29, 2001

[Mom] To Tim: I forgot to mention a situation that has developed with Jason Ellis and also I wanted to let you know what is going on with Tate. Tim, Debbie Ellis called last Sunday and asked if you would consider writing a letter to Jason, encouraging him to stay active in the church and to stay true to his goal to serve a mission. This past year he has not been as valiant in his Priesthood responsibilities and they have felt worried about him leaving home following graduation. He secured a job working at Jackson Hole starting the end of May and they know that several of the members of his work team are not a good influence on him. Debbie said that you and Brodie always had such a positive influence on him and she and Bruce thought it might help him

if you would just drop him a note and encourage him to stay active while he is away this summer.

Now for the difficult news regarding Tate. His continued inability to crawl has concerned Becky and Chet and when they had him in for his year check-up the doctor told them to give it another couple of months and bring him in again for evaluation. Following that check-up, the doctor suggested that he have an MRI to determine if there was a problem. The fact that he couldn't crawl coupled with the fact that he couldn't connect his sounds with any meaning such as Dada or mama was a concern as well. Last Wednesday he had the MRI and yesterday they received word that he has a rare brain disease which has altered his brain enough that he will need considerable therapy and help. His disease is not treatable nor curable but something that he will live with the rest of his life. His motor skills and language skills will be affected. They are supposed to take him to Primary Children's Hospital for further testing and evaluation and hopefully get more answers on just what to expect.

Of course, this news is devastating to us all and the questions are many and at present, unanswered as to why, how, and what lies ahead. There have already been a lot of tears shed and I suspect that all our lives will be forever altered by this news and the impact it will have. Our hearts ache for Tate and Becky and Chet and yet I know that they are strong individuals and will rise to this enormous challenge.

Last night I retired about 10:30 pm and laid awake for a long time worrying about the future. Today I spent the morning working in the garden, trying to sort out my sorrow and find peace amidst the fears. Surely this experience will be a growing one for us all and we will look back and see the good that comes from it, but for the present, it is a bitter pill to swallow and such a heartache.

July 3, 2001

[Mom] My thoughts and prayers have been with Becky and Chet these past few days. Last Wednesday Becky took Tate in for an MRI at the hospital in Idaho Falls. It was quite a long procedure because he had to be anesthetized beforehand in order to hold still during the MRI. It was nearly 2 pm before he was finished. It had been a long morning for Becky as well as Tate since they arrived at the facility at eight a.m. 10 that morning.

Tate's physician, Dr. Groberg, was out of town for the week and we suspected that they wouldn't get the results of the MRI until Dr. Groberg returned, but Thursday afternoon the radiologist called Becky with the news that there were some abnormalities in the test results and that she and Chet needed to contact Dr. Groberg for further information. This information was understandably distressing to Becky and she called Chet at work. He called the radiologist and received a little more information than had been given Becky. He then left work and went home to talk through the prognosis with her. The radiologist told Chet that Tate has a very rare brain disease called PMG. It causes the brain to develop differently during the gestation period in the mother's womb. Many babies born with this disease begin having seizures in their first few weeks of life. Since Tate has never manifested this symptom of the disease, the physician thought that his case was a "slight" one. He told Chet that Tate would need to go to Primary Children's hospital for further evaluation and help. In the meantime, they would need to work through their pediatrician there in Idaho Falls and see if he needed to start some sort of therapy to help him develop both motor and language skills.

This information left many questions unanswered. Becky asked me to notify her siblings regarding the test results as all of them had been aware of the plans for the MRI and were concerned. As I called everyone, I also invited them to join with us yesterday in a fast in Tate's behalf. Yesterday morning Chet invited Daddy and Mike to join with him in giving Tate a blessing. Following this, Daddy gave Becky a father's blessing and Mike blessed Chet. It was a sweet experience to feel the power of the priesthood and sense the Lord's loving concern for them.

This morning Becky is scheduled to discuss with Dr. Groberg the situation in greater detail. She and Chet are moving ahead with plans to locate a specialist who can give them the help they need to maximize Tate's abilities and help him develop some of the skills that are delayed. They are optimistic and actively pursuing any help that might be available. I know they would appreciate your continuing faith and prayers in their behalf.

On Thursday Paul and Jenny returned from their honeymoon. They had a lot of fun but were feeling the pressures of getting back to Provo and taking care of business so that both of them would be ready for work Monday morning. We enjoyed watching them open gifts. People in the

community were certainly generous with them! It was very rewarding to feel the outpouring of love from our many friends and ward members. They were able to get most of the gifts in their car and they left first thing Friday morning for Provo. Paul called Saturday to reaffirm that they had made it safely and were nearly settled in their apartment.

On Tuesday of last week Daddy took off work early and drove with SaraKay and me to Salt Lake to meet John and Laurel and deliver Emma. She had been staying with us while John and Laurel packed up and prepared for the movers who were scheduled to arrive on Tuesday. When we met them that afternoon, they reported that although the packers had arrived on schedule Monday and finished up, the movers had not come at the appointed hour and so they left their apartment, car, and belongings in the care of the neighbor upstairs and left for the motel where they planned to spend the night and meet us. They were so excited and anxious for the upcoming weeks of getting settled in Michigan. We had a short visit and said our good-byes. It is such a blessing that they have completed their schooling and secured good employment. We are anxious to hear from them and see how things are going.

(Monday 3:00pm) I just received a phone call from Becky who spent some time visiting with her pediatrician, Dr. Groberg. He felt strongly that they needed to have the MRI films evaluated by a neurosurgeon before moving ahead with the medications for PMG. He said that a neurosurgeon from Salt Lake comes once a month to the hospital in Idaho Falls and he would like to have them looked at then. He also felt that Becky should send the MRI results to Randy in Iowa and have his team study them and pull in that second opinion. He wants Becky to get Tate into therapy for his speech and motor skills. He felt that since the frontal lobe of the brain was smaller than usual that perhaps it gave the appearance of the disease. He questioned the prognosis and wanted to get some other opinions before moving ahead. We will keep everyone in touch on this as soon as there is more information.

Steph and Linds' sale seems to be moving ahead. The other couple's house has sold and inspections have been done and things approved. The moving van will arrive on the 10th and they will have several days to load it. The moving company provides the driver and meets them in Logan sometime the following week. Katie returns from girl's camp on the 14th and then they are free to

leave California. Steph was released as YW President yesterday and Linds from the High Council. They have secured a rental home in Providence near Logan. The home is owned by a couple who are presently serving in Japan as mission president. They are so grateful that they are able to get this move made before the new school year begins. We are thrilled to have them closer.

[Dad] Sue has covered the most concerning news of our week. It was such a sweet experience to be in Chet and Becky's home Sunday and enjoy a rich outpouring of the Spirit and feelings of love and peace with the situation with Tate. As I bore my testimony in sacrament meeting, I quoted Isaiah, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." So often it is hard to understand some of the things that come our way in life and may feel, "Why me?" But we always need to move forward with faith and acceptance, doing what we can and know that from the eternal perspective, all things will work together for our good.

Saturday we were able to spend a good day in the yard and garden. With the hot weather we have had lately, the garden is really growing and we are working hard to stay ahead of the weeds. So far, so good. With all our trimming and spraying earlier, it is much easier to keep up with the rest of the yard. I am spraying the apple trees every two weeks and it looks like we have a pretty good crop of apples coming.

July 10, 2001

[Mom] Hopefully each of you have had a spare minute to check your e-mail. We have recently received four letters from Tim after going nearly a month before getting one. He is doing well and seeing a lot of success. As Mike and I read the last letter, Mike commented that Tim had an amazing amount of tenacity. That is what I have observed, not only in his mission experiences but throughout his life's endeavors. As most of you will recall, when he was in his terrible twos, that quality was not exactly an easy one to deal with. Anyway, we are grateful to get news from the mission field and feel of the spirit of the work he is doing. He has been out now for nearly a year!

Steph called yesterday and said that they are living out of boxes and awaiting Tuesday when the moving van will arrive and they will start loading things. All the paper work and closing will take

place this week before they depart on Saturday. They will be staying with Linds' folks in Provo until they receive word from the movers that the van has arrived in Logan. We are planning to meet them there and help them get settled. It doesn't seem possible that for the first time in 12 years they will be living fairly close. We are looking forward to increased association and attendance at special occasions.

Tate begins therapy this week with a child development group in Idaho Falls. He is now standing, holding onto things and becoming more mobile by the day. Becky and Chet are considering taking him to Salt Lake to a pediatric neurosurgeon since the one that travels to Idaho Falls each month is booked solid until the end of August. Hopefully by now Randy's team in Iowa has received the MRI results and will have an opinion for Becky and Chet before long.

We celebrated both Grandma Larsen's and Grandpa Richards' birthdays this past week on July 6th. I was able to call Grandpa to wish him well and today we are going to make a visit to Grandma. We so appreciate and value the strength they bring to their respective families and relish the opportunities for continued association.

For the Fourth of July we spent part of the morning visiting the farm that Daddy grew up on in the Wapello area. The idea came from Mike who has been hunting a variety of reptiles with SaraKay throughout the summer. Daddy commented once that as a small boy he found lizards at various locations on his grandpa's farm. Mike suggested that we take a "trip down memory lane" and visit the farm sometime. The Fourth seemed like a good time since our celebration at the Melaleuca fireworks display didn't start until later that afternoon. We met Becky and Chet in Firth Wednesday morning and they followed us to the farm. Daddy received permission from his Uncle Reid for us to look around and we checked in with him before we took off on foot to explore the area. We took pictures of the home where J. Berkeley and Florence lived and raised their family as well as the small frame house where Daddy lived until he was 12. We explored the outbuildings, the cellar, and listened as Daddy explained the many changes that have taken place. We drove down through a wheat field to get to the Blackfoot River which borders the farm to the east and south and also walked a distance to some sand dunes that Daddy remembered playing on. Although the day was stifling hot, it still was fun to see the area and let Daddy reminisce about old times. Of course,

the biggest difference was that most of the irrigation ditches have been plowed over and wheel lines and pivots have replaced them. There are still a lot of things that are the same, though, and it was interesting to think of the extended Larsen family and the last 45 years since Grandpa Allan Larsen left the Wapello area, took a leap of faith, and bought his own place on the desert west of Moreland.

That evening we were able to enjoy Melaleuca's fireworks display in Idaho Falls. Each year Melaleuca hosts many of its top producers to a trip to Jackson Hole and a buffet dinner and front row seat at the fireworks display. Since Chet receives a free Shilo Hotel suite for the day and he and Becky need to spend a couple hours in the evening visiting with the producers over dinner, they invited us to share the hotel room, enjoy pizza, and help with the children a couple hours. The hotel room balcony overlooks the river, the banquet area, and provides a panoramic view of the riverbank and the thousands of vacationers who line the lawns and greenbelt. It is such a wonderful way to share in the festivities.

The Idaho Falls Symphony provides an outdoor concert prior to the fireworks featuring various pianist and vocalists performing patriotic numbers. During the fireworks display a soul-stirring narration is read to music as the skies over the river are filled with fireworks. It is truly impressive and evokes poignant feelings of gratitude for the blessings and opportunities we enjoy here in "the land of the free".

We arrived about 5:30, had pizza and treats and relaxed. We watched from our balcony as the entire area filled with throngs of people, awaiting the fireworks display. It is so interesting to see the people, some with blankets spread out on the lawn, some with canopies, others on roller blades or just strolling in the evening and enjoying it all. By the time the appointed hour arrived, every available spot, every inch of river bank and lawn as far as we could see was filled with people.

[Dad] I think a real big thank you is in order to Frank Vandersloot for underwriting the Freedom Festival that Sue described for the 4th. Even though Melaleuca made \$350 Million last year and can afford it, not all corporate heads are that patriotic and willing to share with the community.

It was sweet to be able to spend the time with Dad and Alva Lu on Sunday evening. She is a great lady and I appreciate so much all she does for Dad to make life comfortable and meaningful. It

seems to me that the older I get the more I appreciate Dad and all I have learned from him and the example he has been to me in so many ways. It's hard to hear about his falls and realize how close he has come several times to a very serious fall.

Yesterday was a special day for SaraKay. She was so excited for her birthday that she hardly slept the night before and was up opening her presents when I got back from my bike ride at 6:30. She and Sue came down to the office in Pocatello and helped all morning with a major mailing we are sending out with Council Calendars and "Guide to Safe Scouting" booklets to every registered Scout leader in the Council. She had several of her friends over for a party and played games and had a great time in the afternoon. We had a wiener roast for supper and after taking her friends home had a discussion for Home Evening about the things parents should teach their children based on the Priesthood/Relief Society lesson on Sunday. We sure appreciated each of you who remembered her birthday and called and helped to make it a special day for her.

We are looking forward to the Larsen Family Reunion the end of this month in Island Park. Because of camp assignments I missed the last one and really look forward to spending time visiting and playing with my siblings and their families. Sorry that Jeff will just miss us by a week. We so enjoy reading our missionary letters and recognize the growth that Jeff and Tim are experiencing. I couldn't help noticing Tim's tenacity in his last letter also. I thought it was a classic description of bringing all the forces together of the different visitors according to age and fellowshiping to help to bring about the change of heart in a choice family. The eternal ramifications of such tenacity and follow-through to benefit a family are staggering to contemplate.

July 17, 2001

[Mom] My thoughts and prayers have been with Steph and Linds this past week. Stephani has been busy packing and getting things ready to go while Linds finalized things at work and Katie prepared for her first experience at girl's camp. The weeks of preparation haven't been without a lot of nostalgia and even a few tears as the family has said good-bye to home and friends that they have grown to love. This decision to move was certainly not an easy one but I admire them so much for taking the "leap of faith".

They were scheduled to get the moving van on Tuesday, the 10th, and upon Katie's arrival home from girl's camp on Saturday, they left for Utah. Stephani had given me their cell phone number as she was having their regular service discontinued and so I checked on them towards the end of the week. It took 10 men nearly three hours to load the van and even then, they had so much stuff that they had to rent a U-Haul trailer which they pulled behind the minivan. Having to rent the U-Haul complicated their trip, but they were driving two cars and caravanned. When I called them about 10:30 this morning at Linds' parents in Provo, Steph said it was a long trip and that pulling the U-Haul over the Sierras really slowed them down as well as driving through a terrible dust storm in Nevada. They arrived Sunday night about midnight, grateful to have that leg of the marathon completed. The moving van is scheduled to arrive in Logan Wednesday afternoon and if everything goes as planned, we'll meet them there and help with the unloading.

I was worrying about them yesterday and recalling some of the details of their move to Indiana. Much of the Midwest was battling flooding and one night when they exited the freeway, they discovered that the road was covered with several feet of water. Linds tried back the rental truck back up the exit, but they were trailing their car on a car dolly and it was impossible to back it up straight. They had to unhook the car, maneuver it over to the side, backup the van, somehow reattach the car, and all of this in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere with two small preschoolers and Steph pregnant with Josh. What a nightmare!

Their move back after three years in Bloomington also had its moments. Steph and the three children had made arrangements to fly to Utah and Linds drove the rental truck alone. The morning that Lind was to deliver them to the airport, they realized that they hadn't allowed for the time difference in Tennessee and they were an hour later than they thought they were. When it dawned on them, they made a mad dash for the airport, calling ahead and arrived in the nick of time to catch their flight. The wonderful thing about the whole episode was that a kind woman on the same flight was sensitive to Stephani's needs and helped her care for the children the entire time, lightening the load for one very tired young mother.

Moving is always traumatic and it seems like the long distances just add to the stress. It's a disconcerting feeling to have everything you own

piled into a vehicle and to strike out onto the nation's highways enroute to a new life. We have only done it a few times, but it leaves me feeling empty and disconnected. It's always a relief to arrive at the new location and get the beds set up so we have some semblance of normality although the actual adjustment with finding new doctors, dentists, mechanics, and shopping connections takes a little longer. Thank goodness for the church and the wonderful network of acquaintances it gives us wherever go.

I visited for a few minutes last night with John and Laurel. The ward there in Michigan is being so good to them! They are enjoying the beautiful area and their new home and finally are down to the final few boxes to unload. Laurel will begin teaching some classes at the dance school starting in September and substituting in an aerobics class. That will be a wonderful release for her and fun for Emma and James to meet some new friends, too.

For the past several months I have been watching the want ads for a full-size violin for SaraKay. She has been using a borrowed one this past year and a half since outgrowing her half size that we bought when she was in third grade. I always worry when I borrow and I told Daddy several months ago that following the wedding, we needed to resolve the violin issue. Two weeks ago I saw an advertisement in the Post Register for violins and I called. A jeweler in Rexburg, who has a hobby of collecting violins, was selling some of them before moving to Hawaii where his wife was on sabbatical from Ricks College for a year. We made the trip to Rexburg to see the two that were in our price range and bought one of them. I had previously checked with music stores regarding prices to lease or buy and felt like we were looking at around \$500 at the lower end of the scale. Bill Walden's were very nice and comparable with those we had seen for much more elsewhere. Although we hadn't yet sold our half-size one, Daddy went ahead with the purchase and SaraKay has been enjoying her new instrument this past week.

We immediately put an ad in the local paper regarding the one I needed to sell and I hadn't had a single call on it. Someone suggested that my timing was wrong and that I should wait and list it closer to the opening of school when parents are getting things set up for the new school year and lessons.

This morning a lady called and inquired regarding the violin. She was here for a couple weeks visiting her parents in Blackfoot from Chile where her husband works at the US Embassy. She has an eight-year-old son who has wanted to start taking lessons in Chile but they have looked since last November for a small violin and had just about given up when they saw our ad and responded. They came over this morning to see it and what a surprise it was when I recognized a member of the family: Rachel, who had been a close friend of Mike's at BYU and had helped us clean his apartment the day we moved him home. I knew Rachel's parents were living in Chile and affiliated with the embassy there but it didn't dawn on me that I was talking with her mother earlier that morning regarding the violin. They were thrilled to get our precious violin and having that money will go a long way towards defraying the cost of the new one. We feel that this was an answer to prayer and are so grateful that the way has been opened up for us to continue with her violin studies.

When I told Daddy that I was going to mention the violin purchase, he expressed regret that we didn't have the resources to do this for all of you siblings when you were growing up. I hope that each of you realize that we did the best we could and we felt fortunate that each of you had the opportunity to take piano lessons and gain some proficiency in it. Few things have the potential for greater satisfaction in our lives. We are pleased to see the emphasis on talent development in your homes and encourage you to continue it. I know through personal experience that the Lord will assist you in your efforts and the way will be opened if you do all you can to make it happen.

[Dad] For FHE last night we decided to go to Idaho Falls to a movie. I had a load of stuff for camps that needed to go to the Idaho Falls Office either last night or this morning so we decided to make a trip of it. We went to Crocodile Dundee III and enjoyed a good entertaining movie without much language. As we were leaving, we called Chet and Becky to see what was going on and found out that Tate had fractured his ankle. Apparently, he had pulled himself up to stand in his crib and crawled over the side and fell, landing on his feet but twisting his ankle and fracturing it. It is heavily splinted but they won't cast it for a week because of swelling: nothing like kids to keep your life in constant turmoil.

Saturday night Sue and I went to Wood Badge staff social at Jay Bawden's in Pocatello. What a

great group of people and we thoroughly enjoyed the food, company, and visits. I am sure looking forward to our course in August and would again invite any of you who would be interested to join us. It's a wonderful leadership training experience that is on a par with anything offered out there.

Friday night was a five-stake barbecue and dance for the youth hosted by the West Stake. We had a great time with the kids dancing, playing games, visiting, and eating. We were disappointed in the turnout and had lots of food left over, but those that were there had a great time. It was a good time to just visit with some dear friends that were there as chaperones. We had been holding our breath that the weather would hold for us because the last several days had been fraught with thunderstorms. A couple storms had rolled through during the day on Friday. We were fine until about 10:30 when the lightning seemed to be hitting really close and we decided to close things down. As soon as we had the closing prayer, it started to rain, dumping down buckets. The lightning continued that night and Mike sat out on the back step watching it for a while.

We had the opportunity of feeding the missionaries on Friday night. They are a sweet couple of Elders—one from Durango, Colorado and the other from California. We had a nice visit with them and I couldn't help thinking of the different circumstances for Tim when he eats with the members. That was emphasized by the pictures he sent home.

July 24, 2001

[Mom] It's a beautiful summer day today with a slight breeze to keep it cool. This past week has been much nicer than the previous ones and we have been grateful for the respite from the heat. As many of you are aware, Idaho is in the middle of a drought and predictions are that we will run out of irrigation water before the summer is over. It's hard to believe that just four years ago we were in the midst of a flood that kept the community sandbagging for days! It really highlights our dependency on the Lord and how quickly our beautiful valley could be turned into a dustbowl.

On Friday evening we traveled to Jackson Hole where we enjoyed a chuckwagon dinner and program at the Bar J Ranch. The whole high priest quorum went as a group and it was fun to take off for an evening, enjoy the beautiful scenery enroute, and participate in some delightful

entertainment. Several in the group had been to the ranch before but it was a first for Daddy and me and we had such a fun time. The program included lots of good humor, a western vocal quartet accompanied by a bass fiddle, violins, and guitars, and a singer who had the most awesome bass voice that I have ever heard. I suspected that the program was the same one that Paul and Jenny saw while they were on their honeymoon. Prior to the program, the Bar J fed 750 guests in less than an hour. No small task! It was after midnight when we arrived home but the entire evening had been very enjoyable.

Enroute to Jackson we went past Palisades Dam. It was amazing to see how low the reservoir was and that it was drained dry at the upper end. It is very humbling to see our water reserves nearly depleted when there is so much of the season left. It makes us wonder about our underground aquifer from which the domestic wells as well as for sprinkling systems draw. We continue to pray for rain and for the upcoming season to be a snowy one.

Yesterday we traveled to Logan and spent the night with Steve and Bonnie before going over to Providence to help Steph and Linds move in. Their moving van arrived about two that afternoon and with the help of Linds' two brothers, Mark and Chris, and a brother-in-law, as well as Daddy and Steve, the van was unloaded by about five o'clock. Their home is located just a few minutes from Logan in a lovely area in the foothills. Steph said that they have received a wonderful welcome in the ward despite the fact that people realize that they are only temporary residents. The home is owned by a couple who are presently serving as mission presidents in Japan and who will be returning in June of 2002. It is such a relief to have the move behind them without any mishap.

Last week a friend of ours, Blaine Lyon from Blackfoot, died of a heart attack while backpacking with his son who has recently returned from a mission. They were hiking and Blaine had some pains between his shoulder blades and down his back. At first he didn't know what to make of it but as the pain intensified the two of them started back down the trail for help. They tried to continue but the pain became so bad that he couldn't go on and they stopped at the side of the trail. Blaine told his son that he knew he wouldn't survive long enough for him to go for help since they were about three miles from the trail head and so his son just stayed there with

him until he died. He then covered him with a blanket and hiked out for help. It was certainly a bitter\sweet story and it's given me a lot of cause for reflection. I'm sure it was very traumatic but also sweet to be with his Dad in his final moments. Life is pretty fragile.

[Mom] I don't have time to write much but I wanted to give just a few details regarding the reunion. Rick and Terry were the ones in charge this time and had done a tremendous amount of work. With the financial help of Grandpa, they reserved three condominiums in Island Park to house the family. Jeanie, Scott, David, Bethany, Maren and Brock and baby, Julianne, Brad and baby, and Miken and her two toddlers, and Christian occupied the first one. It was such an effort on their part to be there despite the long distances involved. Jeanie has always put attendance at the reunion right at the top of her list of priorities and it was such a sweet thing to see them and their growing family.

The second cabin was occupied by Rick, Terry, Aubrey, Jonathon, Daddy and I, Sara Kay, Steph and Linds, Katie, Sam and Josh, Stephen, Rachel, and Nate, Paul and Jenny, with Becky, Maddie, Tate and Mike, Jacob and Amanda joining us for most of Tuesday. It was especially sweet to have Paul and Jenny and Stephani and Linds able to attend since it has been nearly ten years since the Bennion's have been able to come. In the third cabin was Mark, Rita, Jessica, Jeanette, JoEllen, Karen and Teresa, and Gary.

Each cabin provided its own breakfast and lunch and we ate dinner together at our cabin each evening with the entire group. The condos were absolutely wonderful. Although there were a few variations in the style, they had a living room, dining area and kitchen, bathroom, and two bedrooms on the main level. There was a deck around half of the cabin and a large hot tub which was a terrific hit from the minute we arrived. Upstairs were other sleeping facilities and there was also a finished basement which had other bedrooms and a large playroom. It was certainly a treat to have such modern facilities.

Monday afternoon was spent visiting, swimming in the hot tubs, playing volleyball, biking, and just relaxing. Tuesday morning we biked and hiked and enjoyed the scenery as we visited. It provided us with the chance to visit one-on-one with other family members and see some of the wildlife and backroads. That afternoon we took two groups on river trips in a rubber raft. The first group was

SaraKay, Mike, Paul, Jenny, Linds, Steph, Katie, Sam, Josh, Steve, Rachel, Nathan, Becky, and Maddie on a slow and shallow stretch of the Buffalo River and the second group was made up of JoEllen, Jeanette, David, Christian, Brad, Jacob, Aubrey, Mike, and Teresa. They put in at Box Canyon and had some whitewater to paddle through.

That evening Rick conducted a family meeting, program and testimony meeting which included responses from Grandpa and Alva Lu and children. It was poignant to hear responses from Daddy and his siblings. Many referred to their heritage of righteousness and expressed appreciation to Grandpa for his loving support and example throughout their lives. Tributes were also paid to Alva Lu and gratitude expressed for all she has done to strengthen and support the family. Grandma Barbara was also mentioned and remembered. It was a sweet experience and a fitting climax to our time together.

I know that Daddy will have some things to add to this but he will do that in next week's letter. When we arrived home and picked up the newspaper, we saw the headlines naming Tom Moss as President Bush's appointment to a state position and so Daddy is in the process of organizing the meeting to choose his replacement as our district's representative in Boise. Next week Daddy will be at Island Park with the stake YW for camp and the following week is Wood Badge. His time is really at a premium right now. He just called and said that he had picked up the mail and there were two letters from Tim so I will try to get those transmitted tonight.

August 9, 2001

[Mom] Canning season is upon us and the race to keep up with the garden production is on! I forget how time-consuming canning is and how hard it is to find time for it amid the many activities of summer. Daddy left early Monday morning to spend a week at Island Park Scout Camp with the NW Stake YW. He rode with Patriarch Evans and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity for some one on one with him. When he arrived, he discovered that the sleeping arrangements were for him to sleep in the back of Brother Evan's pickup with him. They are both pretty good-sized men and it was obvious to Daddy that he needed his own facilities. He called and had me take our tent to Jan Barrett who was going to camp on Tuesday. He also requested his kapote and walking stick.

Yesterday SaraKay, Tricia Mangum, Melanie Hanni, and I left about noon and spent the afternoon and evening at camp. Daddy and I were the speakers for a fireside that evening in the amphitheater. It was fun to be back at camp and have SaraKay know several of the staff members and be so familiar with the facilities. She kayaked and also spent some time on the repelling tower before we went to dinner at the stake camp location.

Daddy has been bugling for them at flag ceremony all week and has received many compliments from the participants about how sweet it is to have that as a part of camp this year. There is something very special about the sound of a trumpet reverberating in the mountains and it always thrills me to hear it, especially when Daddy plays such songs as "How Great Thou Art" and "Come, Come, Ye Saints" just as people are retiring for the night.

Tuesday evening I enjoyed a surprise visit from my brother, Nate. He was returning from a seminar in Salt Lake and a visit with Mom and Dad. He is such a special friend and we had several hours together, talking about family and the details of his new job as an employee of Jeppson Construction. For the present time Nate will be supervising the building of a new chapel in the Billings area but when that is completed he will be assigned to a different area. There is a new chapel scheduled to be built a couple hours away from Billings and he is hoping to be assigned to that one so he doesn't have so much time away from his family, but that is the downside of the job. It is a wonderful job complete with travel allowance, insurance benefits, and good salary.

He is just completing a beautiful home in the hills above Billings which they will move into very shortly and Maureen has been busy selecting colors and carpet. Originally, he was building the home to sell and he included some very fancy features that would make it appealing to a buyer. The longer he worked on it, the more Maureen fell in love with it and finally convinced Nate that they should be the owners themselves. Nate's only reservation about living in this new home is that he doesn't want to alienate some of his friends who can't afford such luxury. I reassured him that his decision to put his wife's wishes ahead of other considerations was the right one. He has always been very sensitive and compassionate towards the less fortunate and these attributes have endeared him to people where ever he has lived. I am so pleased that good fortune is going

his way and that he may have some reprieve from the financial troubles that have been so much a part of his life.

Mike is nearing the time to leave for Iowa. His last day of work is Wednesday. He will finish packing up Thursday and leave early Friday morning, hoping to get in a big day that first day of travel and arrive in Iowa on Saturday afternoon. He is leaving behind some wonderful friends from the ISU singles ward. Hardly a week goes by that they haven't had FHE, a baseball game, dates, and a Saturday of hiking, exploring, or ultimate Frisbee.

I wanted to mention a funny thing that happened in conjunction with the Larsen reunion. When we left on Monday, I reminded Mike who was coming with Becky to the reunion on Tuesday morning, to lock up the house, close the windows, and leave only the patio door unlocked. I must have failed to mention the "why" for the instructions but anyway, when he left on Monday night for Idaho Falls, he felt prompted to lock the patio door, too. He didn't realize that Paul and Jenny were leaving the reunion early and planning to come home for a few minutes to pick up some things here that they needed to take with them to Provo. Anyway, on Tuesday afternoon Paul and Jenny left the reunion and headed for Blackfoot and home only to discover when they got here that the house was all locked up. They found a window ajar and Paul crawled in through the window and let Jenny in.

They quickly gathered up their belongings and, before leaving, locked everything up again. Jenny, assuming that we liked things secure, even locked the door in the laundry room leading to the garage. Consequently, when Mike arrived home about 10 pm he was bewildered to discover that although he could open the garage doors, all doors were locked up tight and he couldn't gain entrance. He decided to try the old "climb down the wood chute" trick and opened the metal door and started down the chute, narrowly fitting in the small opening. By this time, it was dark outside and extremely dark inside and he suffered from a touch of claustrophobia. He realized that if he got stuck in the wood chute that no one would even know that he was there and he might be stuck until the following day when we arrived home from Island Park. Slowly he backed out of the small hole and went next door to recruit a neighbor boy, Derek Hanni, who once before had helped us in another such situation. But, Derek wasn't home and so his mother, Melanie offered to help Mike and loan him a flashlight, too. So, with Melanie in her bathrobe, they approached the metal chute

door and again Mike wedged himself into the blackness of the furnace room, this time with one arm outstretched carrying the dim and failing flashlight. He immediately discovered that the wood box was filled instead of empty and even the chute had several pieces of splintery wood, some with nails exposed. This made the task much more difficult but slowly he inched along the chute, realizing with some panic that Melanie's flashlight was showing distinct signs of dying and that he needed to get in far enough that he could negotiate the rest of the way in blackness if needs be. At one point he was wedged in so tightly that he couldn't move and he yelled to Melanie to push on his legs and give him the momentum he needed to go the distance. He thought as he felt her pushing against his protruding legs that it would have made a pretty funny sight if anyone driving by would have seen the two of them, but never-the-less, the shove did the trick and he broke loose and was able to climb on the wood in the bin and then quickly jump from there onto the floor and get the light turned on.

Later, as Mike related the events to us, I couldn't help thinking how many times the Hanni's have bailed us out of ridiculous situations and how grateful we are for their patience with the antics that go on over here. Well, I had better go. I'm in the middle of processing another pressure cooker full of string beans and the irrigation water needs to be turned off before we have a flood or something. Life is good!

August 14, 2001

[Mom] Last week was pretty crazy with all the canning and other commitments. It was nice to make it to the weekend and have Daddy home again. He had a wonderful time at camp and was pleased with how things went for the stake YW.

Tonight he is in charge of the Republican meeting to select a replacement for Tom Moss who has been appointed to a federal judgeship by President Bush. This is the third time this process has taken place since Dad was elected as District 31 chairman and although it's a lot of work, it's quite exciting and interesting. He has been concerned about getting it taken care of before leaving for Wood Badge on Thursday and within the prescribed 10 days of Tom's resignation. He has been on the phone with the candidates as well as the media and hopefully it will go off smoothly. Of the six candidates, three are women. I suspect that one of the women will get the

nomination since they are all very well qualified and have been politically active for a long time.

Grandpa and Grandma Larsen recently returned from the St. George area where they purchased a home they will use during the winter months. It is in Ivans and was previously owned by Gayle Williams, a man who Grandpa served with in the stake presidency for many years. Gayle passed away several months ago and his wife, Ruby, is in a rest home so the family is divesting itself of the Ivan's residence. It is built all on one level with wide halls and doorways, and other accommodations for retired couples. I think they are thrilled with the purchase and so happy to get a winter residence a little closer to Idaho. Ruby has fully furnished the home and so it won't entail a lot of work for Dad and Alva Lu to move when winter approaches. We are so pleased for them and feel like this is a wonderful answer.

Grandpa and Grandma Richards are both in pretty good health. I am always amazed at how much company they have with the comings and goings of their extended family. It seems like hardly a week goes by that they aren't involved in some way with one of the children. I know that Aunt Kathy is a constant source of help and comfort to them. Grandpa mentioned that one afternoon Kathy arrived from work and brought him supper from a local fast food place. He said the two of them sat eating hamburgers and fries and enjoyed visiting together. Last week Nate spent part of the week with them and the week before Don and Deniece were there job hunting from Ohio. Grandpa is losing the strength in his legs and relies more on his wheelchair than he used to. Parkinson's causes a stiffening and weakening and Grandma said that this is to be expected as the disease progresses. I so admire her for her regular visits and devotion and know that her daily visits ensure that Daddy will be properly cared for.

Steph and Linds are settled in and school will be starting in a couple of weeks for the kids. They are thoroughly enjoying Logan and even attended their first rodeo last Friday night. Linds was called to be Cubmaster and Steph a Sunday School teacher for the 13-year-olds.

Randy is starting to get inquiries regarding staying on for a fellowship following his completion of his residency and several of his mentors are encouraging that. The offers are pretty prestigious and would probably indicate that the fellowship would focus on research and teaching at a medical school. They have had a lot advice

regarding the pros and cons of such a course of action. They are still debating with the decision needing to be made by this fall.

Jonie called last week to get a recipe for peaches. She and Jeff had bought some and were trying to get them canned. It always pleases me to know that there are some things she learned while living here that she is perpetuating in her own home. She has quit work at the pharmacy and is home with the family for a while. She said that she has been so busy that she doesn't know how she could have worked and done all the other things she has been involved in. Her three will soon be off for school and preschool and she will have a little more settled life.

Steve left today for a week at scout camp. It was his first experience going as a leader and he was busy last night getting packed up. Part way through the week the bishop is going to visit the camp and bring Nate along to spend a couple of days with his Dad and give Bonnie a reprieve. Rachel and Chrissy are coming to visit us for Wednesday and Thursday so that they get a break, too and that will help pass the long week a little faster. Steve survived another round of layoffs last week which reduces his company down to bare bones. It has really been a sad thing to watch good people be let go because of the downturn in the technology industries and Steve said that his boss didn't think they have bottomed out yet! Remember him in your prayers.

Andrea called this morning after her first check-up with the surgeon and the news was all good! He was so pleased with how things have healed and gave her glowing reports. She is feeling better than she has felt in months. She is enjoying their home more each day and loves the ward and the good people in their neighborhood. David was put in the stake mission presidency and Andrea was put in as the compassionate service leader. Laurel and Angela start school in two weeks and are excited for that.

Becky and Chet are both in the throes of pitching their internet business as well as trying to keep up with their normal daily demands. The meet with a specialist from Salt Lake next week regarding Tate and have gathered opinion from Randy's team as well as from a world-renowned radiologist in Salt Lake that Lane works for. They really appreciate the opportunity to get the x-rays in front of these specialists and to get as many opinions as is possible for their consideration. This week Tate has been receiving both physical and speech

therapy and it has been very interesting. Chet is involved right now with making some crucial decisions regarding Korea verses graduate school in the months ahead.

John and Laurel love Michigan and are enjoying getting acquainted. They recently made a trip to visit Laurel's sister, Becky, and her family in Indianapolis. It has been fun for them to be so close to Laurel's family and have the chance to be a part of their gatherings. Emma has a birthday coming up shortly and last night on chat John said that when she asked Emma who she wanted to invite for her party, she said, "Uncle Mike." That kind of pulled at some heartstrings; Mike has had a special bond with her, a result of frequent visits to their house in Provo.

Mike leaves early Friday morning for Iowa. The race is on to see if he can actually finish up his scrapbook and photo album before leaving. He has been pecking away at getting all his papers organized, cataloged, mounted, and his books complete. We have done our best to clean out his stuff from the storage room and make sure that we are storing only truly essential items. Of course, that includes his fake hand, rubber boa constrictor, machete, gorilla mask, and all his "Kill the King" equipment and sonic blasters. The radiation protection suit and his Elvis outfit must make the trip to Iowa since they were invaluable in Provo and he is confident that he will have opportunity to use them again and again. The question remains, "Can Mike and all his things fit in a small two door Toyota Tercel? By Thursday night at midnight we will have the answer. He was fortunate that an acquaintance in American Falls was renting a U-Haul and offered to take his bike, boxes of kitchen things, and bedding. Shauntel reported on chat that they had arrived and were awaiting Mike's arrival. I think it's finally hitting Mike that he is beginning an exciting new era. I still wish that he had found a wife this summer, but who knows, there probably wouldn't be room for her in the Toyota, anyway.

Paul and Jenny said that counting reunions for both families, mission homecomings for her brother and grandparents, their honeymoon, and other occasions; they have been vacationing more days since their wedding than they have been at work! Wow, what a life. Seriously though, they have had a fun summer coming to know each other's families and participating in all the activities. They are still in the process of looking at various graduate program across the nation including ones in Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin,

and Utah. Paul will be taking his entrance exams late in September. They are enjoying their Provo ward and looking forward to school starting and things settling down.

I transmitted Tim's last letter on Friday with the news that he will be living in Monterrey and working as an assistant zone leader. He seemed happy with the change.

SaraKay has been worming for school money. We haven't really been doing too well and the other day the neighbor boys asked about worming the pasture and we made a deal that if they would rake and mow to prepare the ground to worm, that SaraKay would worm with them. Now to talk her into it! She has enjoyed her vacation from music and school but is ready to get back into it two weeks from today. It's hard to believe that she is in the sixth grade!

I'm looking forward to having Steph and her three here for a couple of days this week to get in more time before school starts. She is going to bring Rachel and Chrissy, too. Dad dug some new potatoes in the garden and the corn is on the verge of being ready so I've got big plans for Mike's sendoff dinner on Thursday night. How do baked ham, creamed potatoes and peas sound with plenty of corn and sautéed zucchini? We're irrigating that day so I think we'll let the kids play in the irrigation ditch and on the flooded back lawn and maybe give them a turn at worming, too. What the heck! When company comes, we Idahoans pull out all the stops.

[Dad] Last night was a long night as the Legislative District committee chose the names to send to the Governor to replace Tom Moss. It was gratifying to have 17 of the 20 eligible precinct committee persons in attendance. We had a good congenial spirit in the meeting and quite easily worked our way down to the final two. We had a rule that the winner had to have a majority of the vote plus 1 to be eligible and a clear #1 preference for the governor. We had to vote and caucus, vote and caucus, until a couple of votes changed and we ended up selecting Janet Aikele, school superintendent from Arco, as the top choice over Becky Limb from Thomas. It is the first time Butte County has had a representative for 32 years.

Much of my effort yesterday was with regard to Wood Badge and getting things ready to go. I have two more days to finish all the preparations and to make sure things are in order for the Tiger Ear and

Charitable Giving conference we are sponsoring in September.

Girl's Camp was a great experience! I ended up being the bugler and garbage man. We had to separate all the garbage and burn all paper products and a stake contingent of 42 campsites creates a lot of garbage. The girls had a wonderful time at the waterfront, rifle range, and COPE course. I arrived on Monday with the youth leaders and all the Stake leaders. We were able to set up camp and get organized, send the girls for a low COPE experience and then went to West Yellowstone for a play at the Playmill. It was so fun—the talent and entertainment value of the young people that work there is incredible.

It was interesting to me that two of the girls that sat next to me were like sphinxes—they didn't clap once, they didn't smile once, they were determined to be as miserable as possible for the whole show. Most of the rest of the girls were really getting into it and thoroughly enjoyed the show even though "Forever Plaid" isn't very contemporary for them.

It was a treat to have Sue and SaraKay come up on Wednesday and have a little time and then to join with Sue in speaking to the girls on the subject of their theme, "Return With Honor." Several of the girls referred to our talks in their testimonies the following night. Each night after playing "Taps" I would play a hymn and received compliments on that.

August 20, 2001

[Mom] Daddy left yesterday for Wood Badge. He spent most of last week preparing and helping the staff set up for the participants who will arrive this morning. He has been excited to have Will Thomas and Bishop Jenks participating in it this year. Although it is a lot of work, it is always a special experience. As for me, the week gets pretty long by the time he arrives home Saturday evening.

Probably my biggest problem is trying to keep up with the watering and gardening. Last week one of the Wray's calves kept getting out of the pasture and wandering around in Hanni's yard. Thank goodness I always had people around to help herd it back into the pasture. The last time it happened, I asked Joel Trejo if I could leave it in his pasture until Kendall came to fix the fence. He agreed and it gave me some peace of mind until Kendall came on Saturday and strung another strand of barbed wire along the top of the existing fence. Hopefully the problem is solved.

As most of you are aware, Mike left Friday morning for Iowa. His last day of work was Wednesday and following his check-out, he went to Becky's for lunch and they took in a session at the temple. The two of them had a sweet time together.

Wednesday morning Stephani left Logan with Katie, Sam and Josh and also Rachel and Chrissy who were coming to spend part of the week here with me since Steve was gone to scout camp with his ward's troop. Originally, they were going to catch a ride with someone from the ward but when Stephani decided to come spend a couple of days with us before Mike left, she offered to bring them with her. She arrived about noon on Wednesday and stayed until Friday morning. Wednesday afternoon we took the kids swimming at the Blackfoot pool. Normally I don't venture in but I could see it was way too many kids for one mom and so I donned a suit and T-shirt and joined the bunch in the pool.

Stephani supervised the kids in the deep end while I kept a close eye on Chrissy. All in all, we had a great time and swam for nearly two hours. Mike joined us for the last hour.

On Thursday morning Becky, Maddie and Tate arrived. Stephani helped me (or shall I say, I helped her) make pies for the evening meal and we enjoyed the chance to be in the kitchen together visiting while the kids played outside on the trampoline and downstairs. After lunch Sam and Josh went with me to check the dams and turn the water out of the canal. A while later everyone was in their swim suits awaiting the arrival of the water. It normally takes a half hour for the stream of water to get from the head gate to our ditch and when it hadn't arrived, I worried that maybe I had opened the wrong slat. I took Maddie and Chrissy with me and we walked across Hanni's lawn. Just as we neared the culvert that goes under their driveway, we heard it and then saw it coming down the ditch. Maddie and Chrissy went running back to the house, yelling, "It's here, the water's finally here." They both stood on the small bridge and watched as it filled the ditch beneath them. Both were obviously puzzled by the sight of not only water, but debris, floating weeds, grass, and bugs in the water. Maddie turned to me and said, "You need to clean it, Grandma!" Neither of them could imagine getting into the ditch with the water like that but when SaraKay and the older kids arrived and climbed in, the two of them soon followed.

We had one inner tube that we had inflated and although it looked too big for the small ditch, it fit just right and floated leisurely along. We brought out a bunch of zucchinis and suggested to the kids that they make boats. Initially I made a simple boat with a carved-out half of a zucchini and placed a string bean on a toothpick attached to the boat. Soon the kids had taken over the project and the boats became more exotic and original. Some had several human "beans" in them, others headsails, and one even looked like a Viking ship with toothpick oars in neat rows on either side of the hull. The amazing thing was that although some tipped on their sides they continued to float. It was fun for the kids to launch them and then run ahead of them to the bridge to fish them out. Once the back lawn got flooded, Tate settled in and had a great time playing with the windfall from the apple tree. Mike got a frisbee game started with the older kids and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the new dimension the water added to the game. By the time the afternoon was over, we had a bunch of tired and sunburned kids.

Thursday night we had a nice going away dinner for Mike. He had invited Becky Tolman to join us for the evening and it was nice for some of the family to get acquainted with her. Becky (Seely) left shortly after supper for home. Neither Maddie nor Tate had taken a nap and they were pretty worn out. Chrissy had been so tired that she nearly fell asleep during dinner so we got her ready for bed, too, and let the older kids play for a while longer. Paul and Jenny arrived about 7:30 and the group played Pit and other games until dark. About 10 o'clock we got the kids to bed and I joined them. I could hear Mike, Paul, Jenny, and Stephani talking and laughing in the living room until the wee hours of the morning. Although Mike's plans to leave early Friday morning were foiled, I knew how much it meant to him to have the chance to say his "good-byes" and I was grateful that several of his siblings were able to be here.

Friday morning was a flurry of activity as Steph loaded up and prepared to leave. During the night Chrissy had gotten sick and been throwing up so I slept with her and tried to get her the help she needed. Steph and family were speaking in church on Sunday so I was hesitant to send Chrissy home to Logan with them and perhaps spread the flu to their family. I called Bonnie and we decided that I would have Rachel and Chrissy stay another day and have them picked up as

Bonnie and Jared came through enroute to her Grandmother Johnson's 80th Birthday party on Saturday in Idaho Falls.

Mike mentioned that he regretted not having Daddy give him a father's blessing before he left for Wood Badge and we talked about it and decided to have Paul give him a blessing. Mike had been feeling nauseous and was worried that maybe he had the flu bug, too, so Paul changed into a white shirt and administered to him and gave him a beautiful blessing that was very timely and touching. The next day when Daddy called, I mentioned the blessing and he said that he had thought of it enroute to Treasure Mountain and wished that he had thought of it before he had left for the weekend.

Mike left about 10:30 and called at nine that night with the news that his trip had been uneventful and he was spending the night in Sydney, Nebraska and would leave about eight the next morning for the final leg of the trip. He arrived in Iowa City about six and found Shauntel and Randy and Camille ready for "Uncle Mike". He was to move into his new apartment today. He said on chat that it is about 4 times larger than any apartment he has ever lived in and he really likes the fellow he is rooming with. He is also a BYU graduate so they have a lot in common. Our prayers are with him in this new adventure. I must admit that I have worried less about him knowing that he has a loving family there in Iowa to be a support system. Thanks, Shauntel, Randy, and Camille!

August 28, 2001

[Mom] School started today and SaraKay was so excited that she had dreams all night in which she jabbered, hollered, and awoke Dad and I throughout the night. When we got up this morning (according to her itemized schedule of daily events) we all felt like the night had been way too short. But, the adrenalin was flowing and she left to catch the bus 20 minutes early. She is due home at any minute and I'm hoping her day was as fun as she thought it was going to be. It is so nice to have the summer past and the regimen and order that the school year brings.

The down side of having school start is that SaraKay isn't available to help me in the garden. Last Thursday we picked corn, husked it, and froze nearly 50 pints before we were through. SaraKay is good help and we enjoyed doing it together. We have enjoyed our cucumbers, zucchini, and even canned five quarts of tomatoes

from our own patch. We have some big pumpkins, squash, and some small decorative gourds that we're growing that we're excited about. Hopefully we can share some of this with those of you who live close.

Last Monday I signed up to substitute teach at Moreland, Rockford and Riverside Elementary Schools. I've felt like I could do that occasionally and bring in some extra money without it interfering with my home duties. Daddy was willing to support me, whatever I decided, and I figured that I could try it and see if it worked. Right now I am pretty busy with the garden and canning but once that is over, I think my time will open up. I have been on the phone this morning lining up piano and violin for another year and trying to get a schedule from the Primary for their girls' activity days so we could work it all in.

Daddy completed our family directory and e-mailed it out last night. I am also sending each of you a copy in the mail just to be sure you each have one. Our Sunday night chat at 7:00 has turned into a fun time. It is easy to get on and the last couple of weeks we have had a good group and great dialogue. We realize that this won't work for everyone every week but know that we are doing it and would welcome your participation.

Daddy arrived home from Wood Badge Saturday night about 7:30. SaraKay and I were both tired of being a boring family of two. We went to the video store on Friday night and checked out two movies and had a Movie-a-thon and ate popcorn. It was fun but not nearly as much fun as we would have had if Mike and Dad would have been here, too. Mike has been greatly missed, but from what I hear from Iowa, our loss is Camille's gain.

The next big effort for Daddy is the fair which starts this weekend. He is using the company pick-up this week to transport flour, sugar, oil, and other essentials for the booth. It is a major accomplishment to have the 500 volunteers signed up and ready for the week let alone making sure that the ingredients are on hand and the equipment is in working order. I always feel grateful to have it over for another year.

[Dad] Last week's Wood Badge was one of the most wonderful courses I have been involved with. The new format is great, with no hidden agendas, a newspaper each day, new modern leadership skills and concepts, involvement of a youth corps to help and so on. The two classes I taught were very well received and I felt good about them. I also had the opportunity to do some bugling

again. For the Scouts's Own (a worship service in an outdoor setting) I played in a trumpet duet to accompany the singing of "How Great Thou Art" and it was beautiful. I was so impressed with the beauty and serenity of Treasure Mountain Scout Camp. I thought about our reunion there a few years ago and Katie's baptism in the lake. I also had the opportunity of being out on the lake in a canoe to retrieve rockets from the rocket launch that was one afternoon's project. We also did a service project for the camp and cleaned up a bunch of deadfalls and leaner's in the east end of the camp. I ended up being on the business end of a chain saw for that project for about 2 hours. The staff was wonderful, nary a murmur of dissent or problems. We ended up with 39 participants and 7 patrols. Bishop Jenks and Will Thomas went from our ward and they had a wonderful time. All in all, it was a wonderful success and many lives were touched and changed for the better.

The last couple of days I have been fighting off a cold. I think I had too little sleep during Wood Badge and my resistance was low and I came home with a developing cold. Yesterday I hauled the nearly two tons of canola oil that will be used in the Tiger Ear booth. Today I receive the rest of the ingredients. The big push is on for the volunteer signups to fill all of the shifts and insure having the help that we need to maximize production for all shifts.

September 4, 2001

[Mom] Daddy left at 6:30 this morning to go load flour, sugar, and get some batches of dough ready for the early shift he had scheduled for nine today. Usually by now the booth has set records, but for some reason the crowds have been down this year and things have been slower. It has been disappointing to have the regular volunteers show up and not have the work to keep them employed. The Tiger Ear booth isn't the only one having this problem; it's fair-wide. Daddy has been working long hours and comes home worn out, but the other professionals spell him off in the afternoon and that helps.

SaraKay and I have been busy getting ready to feed the missionaries tonight. This afternoon she asked me why we always volunteer to do it and I had to admit that somehow feeding the missionaries here makes me feel better about praying that Tim's needs will be met by the good members in the Monterrey area. It's been over a week since we have heard from Tim so we are anxious to get a letter. He seems to be enjoying

the chance to work with the other missionaries and be a little closer to the hub of the mission. It's hard to believe that he has only 11 months left!

We picked tomatoes again today and got another six quarts. I can't believe that off of four small, half dead plants (the frost got to them soon after they were planted) we have gotten nearly 20 quarts of tomatoes! We are still harvesting corn, cucumbers, and the squash and pumpkin are getting bigger every day. The beans continue to produce, but I close my eyes when I walk past and pretend that they aren't there. One of these days we'll pull up the plants and then I won't feel guilty about it. We are proof that praying over your garden really works wonders.

The calves in our pasture have learned that when SaraKay and I head towards the garden, they stand by the rail fence and await a treat. They have enjoyed the garden produce so much that one has been finding a way to get through the fence and help herself to things. We can't figure out how she is doing it so we haven't been able to fix the problem. Sunday morning when we got up, she was just lying in the garden by the fence, contentedly chewing away. So far, she hasn't gotten out on the road, but I find myself counting heads every time I look out the window, half expecting her to be out again. One of the calves has even learned to place both her front hoofs on the bottom rail of the fence and eat the apples off the side of the tree closest to the fence. I expect to find her balancing on the top rail one of these days.

Now, I can just imagine that some of you are saying, "Mom needs to get a life!" It's true that my days are filled with simple pleasures, but I just can't help but be grateful for this time of harvest, the peace in this beautiful valley, the water in the canal, and fine neighbors all around. Aren't we blessed!

SaraKay is back in school and loving every minute. Last night on our way home from Idaho Falls, she remembered that today was a holiday and she commented that she wished it was a school day. It's nice to have her so excited about school although I have to admit that the social scene is more her interest than the academics at this point. She does have some nice friends and she happens to be in a class that is quite athletic and she is excited to win some intramural games this year.

Mike called last night and he is doing well and thoroughly enjoying his classes. He said that last

week wasn't as intense as he knows it is going to get, but he has already gotten into some classes where he is carving molars and working with a manikin. He told SaraKay that the manikin's bottom jaw opens so wide that it looks like an opera singer! Leave it to Mike to find humor in the lab. His social life has ground to a halt but he said that he is quite enjoying having time to do some organizing, journal keeping and play some racquetball. He is the mission leader in his Elder's quorum and has already found some nonmember friends that he thinks hold some promise for investigating the church.

Yesterday I taught about the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum in my Sunday School class. It was a highlight of my teaching experiences this year to hear the class members respond regarding their feelings for the Prophet and their gratitude for the many blessings in their lives because of the sacrifices of the early saints. I have thoroughly enjoyed my job as Gospel Doctrine teacher and relish the chance to spend my time reading the scriptures. So many church responsibilities take so much time with administration duties that there is little time for gospel study. I'm sure it won't last forever, but I'm having a great time while it does.

[Dad] Sue has already given a brief report on my greatest concern right now—the Tiger Ear booth. We are using a different kind of flour this year and it is hard to get the quality and size of "Ears" that I would like. Everything has to work just right and it seems like we get the best quality when I am mixing the dough. I don't mind the physical demands of the booth. In fact, it feels good to be able to be fit enough to handle the rigors of the handling of tons of ingredients that I do. I am always grateful for response of volunteers to man the booth and to work four-hour shifts doing a rather tedious or greasy job to help out the Boy Scouts. One of the biggest headaches I have is working with the lists of volunteers who sign in at the main gate to come and work in the booth and then never show up. We have to pay for their tickets whether they show up at the booth or not and with the \$5.00 gate price, it is a real problem.

Sunday afternoon we went to Idaho Falls and had dinner with Chet and Becky. It is such a treat to have them close enough to be able to have these spontaneous get togethers. We are sure going to go through withdrawal when they leave for Korea or graduate school next year if all goes according to plan. Afterward we went over to Dad and Alva Lu's and had a nice long visit with them. We sure

love them and enjoy our visits. Selfishly I am going to hate to see them go to St. George for the winter though I know it is going to be for the best. Just a couple quotes to finish off with: "The ultimate test of a man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard." - Gaylord Nelson "Two kinds of people on earth can be seen: the people who lift and the people who lean." -Ella Wheeler-Wilcox

September 11, 2001

[Mom] It's been a beautiful fall day today. Last week it finally started feeling like autumn with cold, nippy nights and pleasant, sunny days. It's frozen a couple of nights and we've been grateful that we finished getting our garden cleaned off, except for the squash and pumpkin which both need a while longer to ripen. It seemed like we went from 80-degree weather to 32 degrees overnight. That's Idaho for you!

Daddy's fair week is over and he came in a couple \$1,000 over last year's profits so everyone is happy. It is such a relief to have it completed and not have any major problems with supplies or equipment. The volunteers were dependable and I only worked one shift the entire week. That was a very nice surprise and certainly appreciated since the work in the garden has kept me occupied. I was called to substitute in the seminary last Friday so that took some effort to prepare for. Although I enjoy the opportunity to substitute, it still takes a lot of prep time for the lesson. Fortunately, I had pretty much prepared my Sunday lesson early in the week.

We received some nice journal pages from Tim last week which gave us an update on his activities. It's nice to have him past the halfway mark and to have the weeks whizzing by. I am feeling a little out of touch with everyone else right now but assuming that no news is good news. My thoughts have been with Mike and Paul since they have started back into classes. I guess I ought to include Lindsay in on that, too. When I was working at the Tiger Ear booth the other day, one of the women I was working with asked if I had any college kids. I had to think a minute before answering since we have so many in various stages, but I finally came up with "three". It's a constantly fluctuating situation from year to year. Anyway, we wish all of you well who are involved in school and hope that you can get another year successfully completed.

I need to run. Coleen Winder and I are taking SaraKay and Angela to meet a woman who teaches violin in Firth and is willing to take them as students. I'm not convinced it is the way I want to go, but I decided to go along and see what I think.

[Dad] I am writing this on Tuesday night and you all know what a tragic day in history this has been. We were shocked this morning when Becky called and told us to watch the news. A few minutes later, someone else called for the same purpose. We tuned in just prior to the first tower of the World Trade Center collapsing and have been held in the grip of the enormity of this disaster and the heinous nature of anyone that could plan and execute such a diabolical plot. The staggering loss of lives has left us numb. It has been difficult to not just sit and watch and listen to the news footage of the disaster and be hypnotized by the numbing reality of the change in the reality of our feelings of safety and security. I was impressed with President Bush's statement to the nation tonight. It represented much of the anger and hurt and yet firm resolve to move ahead with the business of life and to pursue with all diligence the culprits who have victimized our nation and any who harbor them.

Much of today and for about 14 hours yesterday I have been helping with a major project at Krupp Hollow—our council's major Cub Scout Day Camp. We have built a new kitchen there, and a Wood Badge course is starting there this Thursday and there is much to be done to finish off the project, get equipment installed and functional and power to other rooms in the Fort which will be used for this course.

Sue mentioned the Tiger Ear booth. I am grateful to have it over for another year. There is always some clean up logistics in removing left over ingredients and selling them or returning them to Sysco for credit. It was a successful year with a gross of about \$2,000 more than last year. However, our overall volume was down nearly 20% and mostly because of the increased gate ticket cost to get into the fair and the crowds simply were not there. That, and the economic crunch felt in the agricultural community. I have been so immersed in Wood Badge, Tiger Ears, and girl's camp for the last month that I really feel out of touch. Thank goodness for a good companion who keeps me up to date with what is going on in each of your lives. Chat was a lot of fun Sunday night. It is always interesting to experience the vitality and wit of the repartee of chat. I am often

convulsed with laughter with the spontaneous remarks you come up with.

Let me close with expressing my faith and conviction that in an eternal sense we are totally safe--regardless of what ills befall us in this life, if we are living the Gospel and true to our covenants, we will enjoy peace and happiness in this life and in the life to come. Terrorism cannot win if we will not be terrorized, but move ahead with faith. Prayers and appropriate offerings of help and support to those who have been impacted by tragedy are the standard of the day. Let us figuratively hold each other's hands and pray together for our continued protection and peace and for blessings of comfort for those who are bereaved. I love you!!! DAD

September 18, 2001

[Mom] It doesn't seem possible that it was just six days ago that the terrorist attacked New York and the Pentagon. It was such a horrifying situation and the more we learned about it, the grimmer the picture became. I stayed glued to the TV, gleaning from the various newscasters the story as it unfolded day by day. The pictures of the devastation were truly unbelievable and the images of the families searching for their loved ones were so touching. On Friday I was able to attend the LDS church broadcast at the stake center. Daddy has been flying the flag at half-mast all week.

For a few days it seemed like time stood still, or perhaps our nation stood still as we all tried to absorb the frightening reality of what had happened. I finally had to pull away from it and try to collect myself to move on with my work.

One night, after hearing the news that the FBI had detained some men and a woman they suspected were trying to board a flight and hijack it, I went to bed but laid awake for a long time worrying about the possibility of further attacks. I was so fearful that I wasn't able to sleep. As I analyzed my apprehensions, I had to remind myself that the terrorists were trying to evoke that kind of a response and that I had to get ahold of myself, exercise faith, and move ahead. I reminded myself that prophecies of the last days have indicated that there would be many tribulations and that if we follow the prophet, we need not fear. It seemed like that thought brought solace and I was able to go to sleep.

I know that many of you have shared these same feelings and it has been reassuring to hear from

you and feel your strength. Only time will tell just what the future will bring. It has been so heartwarming to see the nation unified and to feel the support of many people and nations around the world who support our position. We have heard and continue to hear stories of heroism, sacrifice, and of deliverance. When I talked with Grandma Richards she commented that she still could remember the day Pearl Harbor was bombed and she thought that Tuesday was more devastating than the news of Pearl Harbor. The loss of life has been horrific but, we mustn't forget how many thousands escaped, another miracle of the whole episode.

News of the family: Grandpa Larsen had extensive tests on his esophagus and has an appointment with a specialist. He has trouble swallowing and difficulty eating some foods. Mike has decided against going with the Air Force for his training. He found out that they not only required a three-year payback contract following graduation, but that he would be in the Reserves for five additional years following his payback and subject to call up in case of a national emergency. He felt like it was just too many years and could prove problematic for his future wife and family if the nation was in war.

SaraKay is due to get her new glasses any day now and is so excited! I have reserved the gym for Thanksgiving morning so that we can have our annual volleyball marathon. We invite any and all of you and hope you can come join us! We are planning to do some traveling at Christmas time and get around to visit most of you who live close so we are hoping to get a bunch here for Thanksgiving. Randy's board exams were cancelled on Thursday so he still has that worry ahead. Steve and Bonnie called with the news that the ultrasound revealed that they will be having a little girl come February! Congrats! (Tuesday)Paul took his graduate school exam this morning and called at noon to say that he had done well enough that he is within the range of scores for students at Wisconsin, Minneapolis and even MIT. He was so grateful that he did well and can turn his attention now to his classes for this semester. We hope to hear from Tim soon. We have hoped he hasn't been overly worried upon hearing the news of last week.

[Dad] I really don't have much to add to what Sue has written. Part of last week was a frustrating wait and miscommunication with Sysco to pick up the leftover ingredients from the Tiger Ear Booth. I have been getting a mailing put together for a

James E. West direct mail solicitation. I have it all printed out and am gathering the necessary signatures to be able to get it sent. I have also been working on recruiting for a major Charitable Giving Seminar we are cosponsoring with 15 other charities this Friday. The events of last week has brought our registrations to a halt and we are concerned about the numbers we will have for the out-of-town presenters we have coming.

Tomorrow night is our Stake Priesthood Meeting and I have been doing some preparations for it. One of the things that President VanOrden wanted was for us to come up with a standardized Mission statement for the Aaronic Priesthood. We have about three different versions in the stake and we are different than the West Stake also. Going to the handbook was the answer, and I am pleased with what we have and will share with the stake tomorrow night. In addition, I have been trying to learn a song, "Return with Honor" that was the theme song for Girl's Camp this summer. We have an accompaniment tape with a very sketchy accompaniment and a CD with Candice Carpenter singing the song and women harmony on the chorus. Dan Wallace and I are trying to put it together so we can do it with the tape and it has been pretty tricky to work it out.

September 24, 2001

[Mom] Harvest vacation started today so Sara Kay is home with me for the next two weeks. It is certainly different for us now that all our harvest workers are grown and gone. We feel so removed from the dirt, long hours, and pressures of it all. We feel even more removed from it since Gary isn't farming this year and we won't be making our annual trek out to the farm for potatoes. I'm sure that this harvest will be a difficult one for Gary and his family since it is the first time they haven't been involved with it in many, many years.

Last night I called some of the local spud farmers, trying to locate a place we could get some spuds. Several of them are no longer growing potatoes, some are growing Nakotas instead of Russet Burbanks, and some are selling them directly to the processor without storing them. Part way through my inquiries, I complained to Daddy about how hard it is getting to find a source for Russets and his comment was, "Times are changing."

I guess they are. Now that Gary is out of farming, we don't have that connection with the farm anymore and it makes us all sad to see that era come to an end for both our family and Gary's family particularly. There are many farmers who

are experiencing the same thing and making major adjustments in their lives as they transition from family farms to other employment. We wish Gary and Linda the best as they work through this situation.

After several calls, I tried Bill Martin and he said that I could get some from them. I was so relieved. I can hardly stand the thought of going into winter without a good supply of spuds. We have also wanted to bring a few to the Utah branch of the family and to Dave and Andrea so hopefully this connection will work for us.

I have some big projects planned to help me utilize SaraKay's help during harvest including washing windows, drying garden produce, doing yard work, and other things to prepare for the winter ahead. She has some lists of her own including playing with Trisha, playing with Hillary, playing with Trisha, and playing with Trisha. Hopefully we can find a good compromise that will please us both and help the two weeks go by quickly.

Daddy had an endowment seminar at Camp Tracy in the mountains above Salt Lake last Saturday so SaraKay and I rode along with him and spent the day with Grandma and Grandpa Richards. Imagine my delight to discover that my brother, Charles, had picked the same weekend to visit and so I not only got to see Mom and Dad but also Charles and his two sons who are attending BYU, Sean and Brandon. Charles flew in Friday morning, visited with Grandma that day and spent Friday night in Provo with his boys. Saturday morning, he picked up Grandpa at the rest home and brought him home for the day.

I had previously told Grandma that I wanted to do some thorough cleaning for her while I was there and she had a few projects for me to do. It was especially enjoyable having Charles there to help and visit with while we worked. Grandma fed us a delicious lunch and before we were through Aunt Kathy joined us. She was returning from a three-hour practice at the Conference Center. She has been invited to sing in a choir for the Women's Broadcast on September 29th and had been to a rehearsal all morning. It was a treat to visit with her about that opportunity and about her and Dick's volunteer work at the Utah Prison. She also filled us in on the news regarding Abby; that she has met a fine young returned missionary and it looks like they are getting serious and may be getting engaged.

Sean and Brandon came about three that afternoon. I haven't seen either of them for several years and it was fun to get reacquainted. Sean is a junior and Brandon a freshman at the Y. Sean has a girlfriend and as of last night, they are officially engaged. I tried to convince him that Salt Lake was the place to get married, but he suspects it will be in Seattle or Spokane since that is where her family is living. Brandon will be filling out mission papers over the Christmas break since his birthday is in March. Mandy is the only child at home now and she will be turning 16 next month. Doesn't time fly!

Daddy arrived from his seminar about three and we all went to dinner together a while later. We arrived home about nine that evening, tired but pleased with our trip and the events of the day. I really appreciated Daddy's efforts to support me in going to see Grandma and Grandpa. Most of the professional scouters rode together to the seminar and I know it would have simplified the day for Daddy if he had done the same, but he was so accommodating and responsive to my desires.

Friday night we had tickets to the Ricks Homecoming concert featuring Gladys Knight. It was exciting to be on campus and to see the new sign at the entrance to campus saying, "Brigham Young University-Idaho". It kind of gave me a start when I first saw it. There were blue flags flying everywhere with "BYU-Idaho" on them and throughout the program, comments were made regarding the change. It truly is an amazing thing to see happen and I'm sure will prove to be right for the students and community although some are having a hard time accepting the change. But, "when the Prophet speaks, the debate is over" and time proves the prophetic nature of his decisions.

[Dad] Last week I spent following up with people for the Charitable Giving Seminar we sponsored on Friday. We ended up with about 45 people there and considered it a success even though we didn't have as many CPA and attorney types there as we had hoped for.

The Area II meeting at Camp Tracy was pretty good, and probably the last such meeting because of changes that are taking place in the structure of the Western Region. Provo, Salt Lake, Ogden, and us are part of the Metro Area which includes some councils in Colorado, Nevada, and Arizona. Twin Falls and Boise will be part of either Area 3 or Area 5 and so the convenience we have had of

all the councils in Idaho and Utah being in one Area will be lost. Another benefit of the trip to SLC this weekend was being able to pick up my suit from Mr. Mac. We left it there for alterations last week. Since I bought the suit, I have lost about 35 pounds and needless to say, it didn't fit very well. It is wonderful now and it felt good to wear it Sunday and to feel good in it.

October 2, 2001

[Mom] Most of you have heard the news that Paul and Jenny are expecting a baby in April! Jenny has been sick and trying to juggle taking care of her health needs with holding down a full-time job and a two hour commute each day. Several of us in the family can identify with the sickness part and have given her advice on ways to survive, but never-the-less, it always seems like nothing helps very much until you get past the first few months and the morning sickness goes away. Jenny and Paul were on family chat Sunday and when they were asked where they were applying for graduate school John suggested Michigan, we voted for Idaho, and Shauntel and Mike mentioned Iowa! Why doesn't that surprise me? It was mentioned that they are looking at a school in Illinois that is about a five-hour trip from Coralville so that would not be too far a jaunt for them.

We're starting into our second week of harvest and the weather continues to be unseasonably warm. It has been very pleasant for us to work in the yard and finish gathering in for the winter ahead. We just hope and pray that we get the moisture we need to replenish our water supply this winter. It would be devastating for the area if we didn't.

I had an interesting experience last week. I received a letter from the school district informing me that my fingerprints hadn't been readable and that I would need to have another set taken and resubmitted to the district before my application to substitute could be activated. It was both a disappointment and a relief since I hadn't been called by the district to sub and I thought maybe no one was going to call me, for whatever reason. Now I know that my name isn't even on the list due to the fingerprinting problem.

Anyway, I went in to the county sheriff's department to have the fingerprints redone and the woman who previously did them decided that she would get the head jailor to do it since she is more accustomed to doing it and could probably get a better set. When the jailor arrived, she started taking my prints and after doing the first

hand she stopped, looked at the prints and then inquired, "What do you do for a living?" I responded that I was a homemaker.

"Well," she said, "you don't have any finger prints! Do you spend a lot of time with your hands in the water or working with food?" I had to admit that I did, especially the last few months with canning, gardening, washing windows, and other cleaning projects. "Sometimes the chemicals in cleaning solutions or the acid in food will corrode your fingers and it will take some time to grow the print back. You will need to try another method to lift your prints. I recommend you call the Bannock County sheriff; they have a machine that sometimes can pull a print off when the ink won't."

Well, if that wasn't a crazy deal! Since the incident I have talked to several family members and each has had some funny remark to try to soften the blow for me. "You've literally worked your fingers to the bone!" "This would be the perfect time to rob a bank." I appreciated the humor, but the thought that kept coming to me was the comment that circulates among feminists that a woman who devotes herself to home and family loses her identity. Although I don't think they were referring to finger prints, never-the-less, that comment came to me as I was leaving the sheriff's office and I had to smile. Anyway, I guess I won't be subbing for a few more weeks until we resolve this problem and come up with something. We've had a good laugh over it.

SaraKay and I spent about four hours each day last week washing windows. Our goal was three windows a day. It included lifting the windows out, vacuuming out the runner area, applying Lime-Away to cut the hard water stains, cleaning and drying the window panes, and then lifting them back into place. We figured it took us about 45 minutes a window and longer if we had to clean the blinds, too. It was such a long process and by Saturday morning we were both sick of it and could hardly face another morning of it. But, we persevered and finished up by noon. This week we have the kitchen as our project. It has been nice to have these projects to employ SaraKay since she is too young to hire out for a harvest job and yet she needs to be working and using her time productively. The rest of you kids always had access to harvest work when we farmed or even with Grandpa and then Gary. It has certainly been a help to me.

I'm looking forward to our conference weekend in Logan. We hope to deliver some potatoes, squash

and pumpkins, enjoy conference, play with some grandkids, and have a great time together. We appreciate Steph and Linds putting us up for the night and Steve and Bonnie for hosting the dinner and festivities on Saturday. Hopefully all of you will have the opportunity to hear some of conference before the weekend's over. It is always a time of renewal and such a lift to my spirits.

In the women's conference on Saturday which Becky and I attended together, there were some references made to the terrorist attacks and yesterday in testimony meeting there was also comments regarding them. I have felt like these events have truly brought our nation to a remembrance of our reliance on God. There have been several articles in our local paper about other terrorist concerns including the threats of biological and chemical warfare. It is sobering to think of just how difficult life could become in a very short time if things should escalate at all. Our prayers are certainly with all who lead this church and country and we encourage each of you to do your best to secure yourselves against such times. I know the Lord is mindful of you and will bless you for having your families and putting them first in your lives. We love each of you and pray for you to have the wisdom and strength to accomplish your righteous desires. I best go. It's time to start cleaning kitchen cupboards and wear off a few more fingertips. Mom

[Dad] With regards to Sue's comments about her fingerprints and losing her identity, I would like to say that if anything, working in the home and focusing on her family has certainly revealed and affirmed her identity more than anything. What a blessing for all of us she is as she serves and nurtures each of us in so many ways.

Last night for home evening we dug out sod and weeds around our trees in front. They have grown so much this year that I was amazed at how much we had to widen the circle around them. In her lesson Sunday, Sue had the story read of a pioneer who had to leave their home and trees to colonize. She commented that she could probably leave her home, but it would be harder to leave her trees. We have really grown to love our trees!

We have some beautiful apples this year. It is gratifying to be able to enjoy a harvest of our own sweat and prayers with what we have taken off our garden and are taking off our apple trees this year.

We had a meeting last Friday night with the four course directors for next year to set the tone and

to choose back-up course directors and assistants and to work out details for the Course Directors Conference held in Utah later this month. I was again impressed with the caliber of people that give so much of their time and energy and resources to the Boy Scouts. What a thrill it is to be able to work with them.

October 9, 2001

[Mom] I spent this morning in the kitchen making rolls and a cake for the Godfrey family. Brenda's father passed away while we were in Utah for conference and so I needed to make a visit. They are such dear friends but it has been difficult keeping in touch, with them living in Salt Lake for the past year and a half while Lyle works out of the CES Salt Lake office. They come home occasionally to check on the yard and house and recently they have come to help with Brenda's father who had cancer and was quite bad. The cliché "There's no friend like an old friend" has some truth in it. While I was at the Godfrey's, Marlene Acevedo dropped in to express her condolences. She and Bishop just returned from a three-week stay in Honduras where they helped build and serve in a health clinic as a part of a humanitarian effort by several retired couples from the Blackfoot area. It wasn't the time nor place to visit about her experiences but I'm hoping to have the opportunity to invite them over for a fireside and hear more. Our time in Logan was such a sweet experience. We spent Friday evening at Steph and Linds' watching the BYU football game and visiting. Paul and Jenny arrived soon after we did and we all enjoyed the chance to be together. We watched conference with them on Saturday morning, had lunch and then went to Steve and Bonnie's where we listened to the afternoon session and then had dinner with everyone. The men left for the Priesthood session at six and we women did dishes, sent the kids out to play, and visited until the men arrived home about 8:30.

Following the session and getting the younger kids to bed, we sat around and visited about the information given at the priesthood session and about the other talks and impressions we had during the day's meetings.

Paul had requested a father's blessing and so before he and Jenny left for Bountiful, Daddy gave him one, with Steve and Linds standing in the circle. He usually has one before the school year starts but this year Daddy was at Wood Badge when Paul and Jenny came home in August and

so it didn't get done. It was very sweet to be able to share so much of conference with our family and to have some time with the grandkids.

Later that evening we had a chance to visit with Steve and Bonnie about their job situation. Steve has been working extremely long hours these past few weeks but he said that things were going to be less hectic now that the bugs in the system for Icon were pretty much worked out. Bonnie is feeling good and the ultra-sound showed that the baby is a girl, due February 9th. They have been thinking about naming her "Ann" or "Ann Marie".

Conference was wonderful. I was especially touched by the numerous testimonies of the Atonement and the beautiful prayer offered by President Hinckley at the conclusion. His words in the morning session were comforting and yet his mood was so somber that I couldn't help but feel that there are some difficult times ahead. I have realized more this past week how grateful I am to be led by a prophet and how important it is that we do our very best to follow his counsel.

Last night on Chat Mike said that he listened to conference on a computer at the library on campus. I couldn't help thinking that both Mike and John have been a part of our conference festivities for a lot of years and I truly missed having them with us this past weekend. Having Steph and Linds and family around for some of these quick weekends is such a treat.

Becky met with the neurosurgeon this past week and has written a family letter that Daddy will forward on to each of you. It is so nice to have some of you contributing to the family letter. Not only does it keep us all in touch but it is wonderful to have them as a reference in years to come.

For home evening tonight we put in a row of raspberries from starts the Hanni's gave us. We also put in some strawberries last week and hope that we might be able to be a little more successful with the berries this time around. We have learned a few tricks over the years that we hope will help us keep them free of morning glory and quack grass. Our garden this year has been so successful that we have had ample for us and plenty to share. Tonight we delivered pumpkins and squash to some of our neighbors and decorative gourds to others. It has been amazing to see how much our grocery bill has been defrayed not to mention how fun it is to eat what you grow yourself.

[Dad] I want to add to Mike's comment about listening to conference in the library on the internet. He said there were two dental students and a medical student with their computer screens open to conference. I couldn't help thinking what a blessing technology is for promulgating the gospel and how wise the Church is in taking advantage of it. I can remember on my mission receiving a 16 mm movie of selections of conference several months later and showing it to members in the chapel.

It was fun to be able to watch the BYU game. We haven't been able to watch one for quite a while—just listen on the radio. We also enjoyed the pumpkin/chocolate chip cookies and the milk shakes. It was interesting to think about all the neighbors cheering for Utah State and all of us in the Bennion home cheering for the Y. Going to the Priesthood session with Linds, Steve, and Paul was also a treat. I am always reminded how grateful I am for righteous children and in-laws and how wonderful it is to share such spiritual experiences together. It was fun to be able to sit around with the "girls" afterward and discuss the stories and teachings and what we had learned.

Saturday morning I went out early for a walk and missed a step on Steph & Linds' front walk. I continued on for my walk but must have pulled something, because I was sure sore and crippled up for the rest of the stay in Utah. Yesterday I tried to walk it off and felt quite a bit better by the end of the day. It's hard to have the weather turning much colder and to have to walk all bundled up rather than riding my bike.

October 15, 2001

[Mom] Our busy weekend is over and things have settled down on the home front. Last Saturday evening we hosted a dinner party for all the stake YM and YW leaders and their spouses. Daddy and I worked most of the week getting the house and yard ready for the event. Daddy finished rototilling the garden after cleaning off the last of the pumpkins and squash and discarding the last of the corn stalks. He dug around the base of all the trees in the yard and fertilized and irrigated the new raspberry and strawberry plants. We picked the last of the apples and have them stored in the garage where they can be kept cool until I decide what to do with them.

It was so cold and miserable for most of last week that the work in the yard was unpleasant but it feels good to have it done and know we are ready for winter weather. It has been nice to get the last

of the garden gathered in and have enough that we have shared with many neighbors and friends.

I spent part of the weekend doing thorough cleaning and Saturday afternoon SaraKay and I decorated with pumpkins and gourds. She painted cute faces on the gourds and we used some of them for table decorations. Daddy brought up the extra table from downstairs so we had seating for all our guests, although we did have to remove the recliner and lamp table from the corner of the dining room to make space.

Wednesday Rick called and asked if we knew that Grandpa and Grandma Larsen were leaving for St. George Monday (today). We hadn't known and were surprised since Daddy had been with them less than a week ago and nothing was mentioned at that time. Rick suggested that we get together before they left since they will be gone until next March or April and we agreed. We offered our home since we were already doing the preparations for the dinner party the night before. We invited Alva Lu's family and the Larsen's and it turned out to be a lovely occasion. We were able to serve pretty much the same menu for both occasions, use the same set-up and decorations and it worked well. Everyone helped with the food and the paper products made the clean-up quick and easy. Of course, Terry always brings more than her share of goodies on such an occasion and her help with the meal was invaluable.

I had been so stressed last week about all the arrangements and preparations that it wasn't until all the guests were gone Sunday night and we were saying our good-byes to Allan and Alva Lu that I realized how hard it is going to be to have them gone for so long. It has been a treat since their release from the temple presidency to have them available to drop in and visit with them. We know that they need to get out of the cold and icy winter weather and that St. George will be much nicer but we are really going to miss them. They recently purchased a new laptop and will now have e-mail so if any of you want to drop them a note, please do.

Last night about 8:30 the phone rang and it was Laurel (of Boise). She was so sweet and called to thank me for her birthday card and money. The minute I heard her voice I realized that I had forgotten to call her. I had it written on my day-timer and had thought of it Saturday but thought that I would remember on Sunday and do it then. Anyway, we had a wonderful visit, complete with my apology for the slip-up and a promise that

when we come on the 27th for her baptism that we would bring a pumpkin and help her and Angela and Joseph carve it for Halloween.

After visiting with Laurel, I had a minute with David and he mentioned again that they would love to have anyone come for the baptism on October 27th at 4:30 pm that wanted to, but that if they had their preference, they would rather have you come at a time when there would be less commotion and company and more time for a couple-to-couple visit. I guess Becky and Chet are taking them up on that offer and going over this weekend to spend some time with them. We will be going over on the 27th and spending the afternoon and night as will Andrea's mother from Provo.

Shauntel called last night after chat and mentioned that they would be leaving Wednesday night to travel to St. Louis where Randy will be taking his boards on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. It is a time of high stress and lots of studying for him and I'm sure he will be relieved when they are over. They were going to include some sightseeing in their plans and return Saturday evening.

When I couldn't remember who had who for the gift exchange and I wanted to include that in today's letter, I decided to go back to last year's Oct-November letters and check the assignments for last year. It didn't take long to locate the letters and I began reading. What an amazing thing to step back one year and read about Mike getting news from dental schools, Tim's opportunity to sing in the conference center before leaving on Monday morning for the mission field, the family gathering at 5 a.m. to wish him farewell at the Salt Lake Airport, Paul's date with Jenny to the Utah Symphony, the problems with Mike's flight being cancelled the night he flew in from Iowa and his interview, plans for Thanksgiving complete with Steve Lan, Linds getting the results back from his qualifying exams, and other interesting events. Rereading those letters brought a wonderful flood of memories but even more than that, it helped me remember the Lord's goodness to us, the many prayers answered, the miracles we've seen, and the wonderful experiences we've shared.

[Dad] From Sue's description of last week you can see that we have been pretty busy around here. It always feels good to have our home and yard properly attended to and looking well groomed. I can't believe the satisfaction we've had from our garden this year. Saturday night almost all the

guests took us up on the invitation to take gourds and squash home with them. It was a satisfying social evening of visiting and eating a wonderful meal thanks to Sue's expertise and planning. Afterward each of us shared some of our thoughts about special times with the youth this past year and a couple of musical numbers. It is nice to enjoy the people you work with and recognize their greatness in their callings and the tremendous influence for good they have.

This quote is from anonymous, but I think it has a great deal of significance in today's climate: "Security is not the absence of danger, but the presence of God, no matter what the danger." We have been watching all the war developments and wondering about the implications. I was impressed with how many people in Sunday School class mentioned how much they had looked forward to the reassurances of President Hinckley and his messages at conference. What a blessing to have a prophet to guide us through these tumultuous times.

For home evening tonight we had a unique situation. SaraKay's friend, Trisha called and needed a place to go for about an hour while her older sister and parents went to a year-end volleyball party. Sue had a lesson prepared on respect based on an article in the Ensign. Part way through the lesson, SaraKay wanted to know why we were talking to them about this subject. I couldn't help but think about a quote I heard once: "Children are natural mimics—they act like their parents in spite of every effort to teach them good manners." Anyway, I'm glad that each of you exemplify such good manners and respect in your conduct regardless of any contrary example.

October 22, 2001

[Mom] We have just had two of the most beautiful autumn days that anyone could imagine. The bushes by our driveway are aglow in their fallish colors and the smell of burning leaves is hanging in the air. When I opened the special fall edition of the Morning News on Saturday, there in the garden section was a picture of our garden! It showed two dried and scraggly rows of corn stalks hovering over several large orange pumpkins and equally large squash that had yet to be gathered in. The caption read, "Hubbard squash, pumpkins and corn present an autumn scene on Moreland Road in Bingham County." I pointed it out to Dad and SaraKay and we all agreed that it was our garden. We have been watching over the pumpkins long enough that we knew each one by

sight although we hadn't given them names yet or anything as sentimental as that. The thing that totally convinced us was that immediately to the side of the Hubbard squash was a row of neatly tilled soil. Daddy had gone out a couple weeks ago and carefully rototilled all of the garden except two rows of corn stalks and the pumpkin/squash rows. It was fun to think that we made the paper but a little bit upsetting to SaraKay that someone had been out in our yard taking pictures without us even knowing it!

Speaking of making the paper, many of you have noticed that Bonnie's cute article about family home evening games was published. She told us about a year ago that the Ensign had called and said that they wanted to use her article, but she wasn't sure which month and it had been so long ago that she began to wonder if it was truly going to show up. Well, check on page 69 of the October Ensign and you will see her clever addition to the magazine. Hats off, Bonnie!

Saturday Daddy took advantage of the warm weather and installed some rain gutters on the front of the house. When winter sets in, the front steps become a death trap. As snow melts off the roof, the water drips down onto the steps and then freezes, leaving a thin sheet of treacherous ice. More than once last year we had visitors who nearly lost their footing as they approached the front door. We hope that the rain gutter will keep the area dry and divert the flow elsewhere. We really need to install a rail, too, but for now this may give us some relief from the problem.

It was a several hour task and luckily Daddy was doing it during the BYU/Air Force game and was able to enjoy listening to BYU handily beat them. I was in the kitchen canning apples and every time they would make another touchdown; I would open the small bathroom window and holler out to Daddy just to make sure he had heard it. We both agreed that it was a perfect day to be in Provo enjoying the fall climate, the huge crowds at the stadium, and being a part of it all. For some reason, whenever I think of BYU football I think of Mike. I know how he loved to go to the games and that he has really missed that part of the BYU scene.

I called yesterday to see how Randy got along with his boards and he said that they were harder than he ever dreamed they would be but after comparing his experience with that of the other residents, he learned that they had been that difficult for all of them. That made him feel a little

bit better. He did say that they had a wonderful time on their short three-day excursion to St. Louis and that Camille had the time of her life. I'm glad that they were able to get away and have some family time together.

SaraKay had her first Jazz game on Saturday and they won 40 to 4! The really exciting thing is that she made 10 points. She was passing the ball effectively and made some great assists and steals. Her team this year seems to be more experienced and hopefully they will have some wins.

I was called to substitute twice last week, each for a half day. I was surprised how much I enjoyed the chance to be at SaraKay's school and teach fifth graders. My seminary experience was hard. The lesson was on Jacob's discourse on the fall and atonement and although I followed the lesson plan carefully, I felt like the kids got a little bored by the time the 70 minutes was over. I wanted to do something fun but it is hard for me to play games about the Atonement. Some lessons lend themselves better to creativity than others and this one was hard for me. Luckily, the kids are always respectful and do their best to participate, but I could just feel that they were getting restless by the time class was over.

[Dad] I can't believe how fast October is flying by. Work is always busy with so many things going on and projects to work on—I think I could work 18 hours a day and hardly work myself out of a job. But it is rewarding to be working with a "company" that is so much in harmony with things I believe in. Last week we had an LDS relations conference with Elder Spencer Condie, the new 2nd counselor in the General YM Presidency. We had nearly 1200 people crowded into the University Stake building in Pocatello. I saw a lot of people I knew, but I also saw a lot of people I didn't know! We had to set up the chairs, put handouts and agendas on all the chairs, and usher.

It was fun to watch SaraKay's game on Saturday. I couldn't help comparing with last year when she didn't seem to have any idea what was going on. She played with so much more poise, was in the midst of the action on rebounds, tough on defense and caused several turnovers, and seemed to have a sense for where players were on the floor and set up several plays and assists as well as score 10 points.

Sue mentioned the rain gutter project. As I pulled out the materials to get that job done, I realized I had bought the gutter and hangers 6 years ago. I

really haven't wanted to do that job, even though I knew we needed it. I hope it accomplishes its purpose and keeps the front step a little drier. It was also nice to have the time to clean out the garage and get the winterizing done while the weather was nice.

I have been trying to make it to the temple more frequently. I have been able to go the last four weeks in a row and on Wednesday we are helping the Elder's with their initiatory assignment.

Steve Nelson, a work associate of mine, left today with his wife to go to Tijuana to get their son, Luke, who is just finishing up his mission. I saw Michael Kneese last week and he reminded me that it is only 60 days more until their son is through—he is one of Tim's friends and classmates. We are grateful for the service Tim is giving and the many growing and spiritual experiences he is having and thrill with the lessons he is learning. But the time is fast approaching when we are having to start to set up housing and registration for next fall for him. I am reminded of a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: "I gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which I must stop and look fear in the face I say to myself, I've lived through this and can take the next thing that comes along."

October 29, 2001

[Mom] We returned last night from our brief but satisfying trip to Boise for Laurel's baptism. Daddy had been at a Wood Badge regional training seminar at Camp Kiesel above Ogden for Thursday, Friday and Saturday, but he was able to get away early and arrived home Saturday morning about 9:00 so that we could leave for Boise. He was surprised, upon arriving home, to discover that we had house guests and would be taking them with us to be dropped off in Pocatello to catch another ride back to Malad and their stranded car.

Friday night SaraKay and I borrowed a video from Hannis and watched a cute show about three crooks who decided to go to a small, friendly town and rob the poorly guarded bank the day before Christmas. A snow storm prevented them from escaping and they were trapped until the roads opened later that night. In the meantime, the townsfolk were so good to them that they began to feel badly about robbing the bank and decided to return the money and make things right. It was a cute show and about 9:30 we were through with it and went upstairs to go to bed.

Soon thereafter, the phone rang and it was a young man named Mike Beck. He proceeded to identify himself as a former Ricks College student who had sung in a quartet two years ago with Paul and had stayed a night with us when their quartet was in town to sing at the mission farewell of Nathan Winder. We visited for a couple minutes and then he mentioned that he was enroute to Rexburg to visit friends and had had car problems near the Malad Pass. A motorist had stopped and picked them up and they were about 40 minutes outside of Pocatello. He wondered if I would consider picking them up in Pocatello and bringing them here so that they could call their friends in Rexburg and get the help they needed to get their car fixed.

He said that he knew his parents in Salt Lake were not home and he didn't know who else to call for help. Well, to make a long story short, we went to Pocatello and met them and brought them home for the night. SaraKay thought our hearts had been softened by the movie we had just watched and she was probably right. They tried in vain to reach anyone in Rexburg who was home or who might give them assistance. They finally decided to spend the night with us and try to get help in the morning. So, Saturday morning we were up and on the phone trying to find a mechanic who was working that day. They called their folks in Salt Lake and arranged to meet them in Pocatello where we would drop them off enroute to Boise. They were very appreciative of all we had done to help them out and we were happy to be of service.

I couldn't help thinking about all the car problems and good Samaritans who have assisted our family over the years. It felt good to be able to reciprocate. Hopefully they were able to get the car fixed and continue on to Rexburg as they had wanted to do. They had been very determined to get there before the weekend was over, but as I phoned mechanics, trying to locate a shop that was open for the day, it seemed doubtful to me that they would have much weekend left by the time their odyssey was over. We'll probably never see or hear from them again, but it made for an interesting experience.

We arrived in Boise about 2:30 and hurried to get in our Sunday clothes and help with last minute arrangements for the baptism. Andrea's mother, Laurel, was there and between the bunch of us, we made it out the door and to the stake center at the appointed hour. Daddy and David had gone early to fill the font and get the room set up. There

was a sweet group of families and friends for both Laurel and Alisha Ann and the program was very touching. I had been asked to give a short talk on baptism and struggled with my emotions, especially when I looked down and saw tears in David's eyes. I quickly realized that looking at him was not a good idea and I was able to finish up by keeping myself focused on other things. Dave, Andrea, Laurel and Angela sang "Beautiful Savior" and Alisha's aunt gave a talk on the Holy Ghost. The aunt had a beautiful English accent and used the analogy of a candle to describe the light that shines in our lives because of the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was a very personal and sweet program and touched us all.

We enjoyed ourselves that evening and spent several hours Sunday morning leisurely visiting until their one o'clock sacrament meeting. We all felt badly that we forgot the time change. David left early for meetings only to discover that we had forgotten to reset our clocks Saturday night. He was a good sport about it though, and when he returned we had a good visit while the kids played nonstop in the basement with SaraKay.

The whole family seem to be thoroughly enjoying Boise and the good people in their ward. The girls like their school and Joseph is full of energy and fun. Chantelle was the big surprise. She is a tiny little mite but she is crawling around and seems to enjoy being in the center of all that's happening. We especially enjoyed the chance to visit with Andrea's mother, Laurel, again. She has been such a help and support to them this past year with Chantelle's birth and the surgery. She is a dear friend and we always look forward to our times together.

She mentioned that she is going to be working at Park City during the Olympic games and she shared some interesting facts about the situation with the volunteers during that two-week period. She had to go through interviewing and hiring although it is a volunteer position. The volunteers are not to drive their own cars to and from their stations but are to use public transportation. They are supervised carefully and then awarded a ticket upon successful completion of their assignments. This ticket entitles them to select a gift at a store that will be set up especially for the volunteers. She is very pleased with this upcoming opportunity and has several friends in Springville who will car pool to the public transit location with her. What fun!

Friday evening I called Mike to see how he was doing and mentioned to him that we would be leaving Saturday for Boise and he commented that he was baptizing an investigator Saturday afternoon. He said that if Tim had a Saturday baptism, there would be three Larsen boys in white that day. Interesting thought. We haven't heard from Tim in a long time and keep watching the mailbox for that packet of letters to arrive from Monterrey that usually comes after a long wait.

I had an opportunity last week to substitute teach on Thursday. I didn't get the call until 7:15 that morning so it was a little bit unnerving, but I had a good day and felt okay about how things went. It was especially fun to be in the same school with SaraKay and have lunch together. I know quite a few of the kids and that was fun, too. I was called again on Friday to sub for the band teacher but I had already made plans for the day and told them I couldn't come. It's nice to have the flexibility that substituting gives me although the uncertainty of when and where they'll need me is a little hard to deal with. I'll probably get used to it and it won't be so intimidating after a while.

[Dad] I called Dad today and found him in good spirits. They are really enjoying Ivins and their home without any steps or stairs and all on one level. They received our family letter by email last week, so feel free to drop them a line from time to time. It has been several days since Dad has fallen but he said one cane is not enough to keep him going steady if he goes for a walk. The most ideal thing is a shopping cart—he can hang on to it and follow Alva Lu all over the store.

As we visit with each of you, we find that each has their own set of problems to deal with. They usually aren't apparent to everyone else and we don't discuss them with everyone. It is good to always remember this quote from Norman Vincent Peale: "Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution. If you don't have any problems, you don't get any seeds." It is marvelous to me how Heavenly Father seems to tailor our life's experiences according to our individual needs. As we struggle and grow we discover the seeds of divinity that are planted in each of us. But each of us need our own combination of light, water, fertilizer and cultivation to blossom.

At the Wood Badge Course Director's conference, we had 14 people from our council. I was again impressed with the caliber of volunteers we have that give so much time and effort to making Scout training a success. I saw Brad Allen for a few

minutes on Friday and he said that he had seen Steve the Scoutmaster the night before. His remarks to the group reminded me again of the divine influence in Scouting and why I enjoy being involved with it so much. Camp Kiesel is contained in a small canyon 25 miles East of Ogden, above Huntsville. It is a nice facility with some work progressing on it that will make it much nicer. We normally have this conference at Camp Williams at the point of the mountain below Salt Lake City. Because of heightened security at all military facilities since 9/11 we were told they couldn't let us on base. We were lucky to be able to find such adequate accommodations on such short notice.

I enjoyed the trip to Boise. We thoroughly enjoyed Dave & Andrea's hospitality and were delighted with the time we had with the grandkids there. The baptism was an especially sweet experience. Their Bishop told me how much they appreciate Dave and Andrea in the ward—they are so solid and faithful. It was a little unusual to witness a guitar solo for the special musical number in Sacrament Meeting, but it was very tasteful and well done. We were able to make the trip home in three- and one-half hours.

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you'll help them to become what they are capable of becoming." -Goethe

"When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice." -Indian Proverb

November 6, 2001

[Mom] We received a phone call from Paul on Friday. He and Jenny had been involved in an accident that morning. Paul was driving Jenny to meet her car pool for work but when they arrived and didn't see anyone they headed back home to drop Paul off so Jenny could drive to Salt Lake. As they entered an intersection, a woman approaching the intersection from the opposite direction didn't see them coming and made a left-hand turn and drove right into the side of their car. When Paul saw that they were going to collide, he steered to the right to avoid a direct hit. Her car hit the driver's side door and front fender. Neither Paul nor Jenny were hurt although Paul did have some short-term memory loss immediately following the accident. The EMT's with the ambulance said that sometimes the shock of the accident will cause the loss, even if there aren't injuries. Saturday they both felt stiff

and sore but by Sunday night they were doing fine. We are grateful for their safety and that there were no major injuries. They are in the process of working through the insurances and in the meantime, they have been able to borrow a car from Jennie's uncle in Orem.

We received an e-mail from Steve last week saying that he had survived another round of lay-offs. This is the sixth in the last year and a half. His company is down to about 30-40 employees from several hundred two years ago. Each time this happens Steve says many fine workers are let go and there are always tears shed. In the past year the company has only sold three systems and this certainly does not pay the bills. He said that they have been informed that by the end of the year the company will be closing its doors for good unless something happens and business picks up.

As a part of the e-mail Steve expressed their gratitude for the employment they have had and for their good health, safety and the gospel. He and Bonnie are exploring other options and are accepting the fact that there will probably be some changes in the months ahead. Our prayers are with them. Steve has had a job offer from Icon but the wages in Cache Valley are certainly not on a par with what he has been making and so he continues to look for other opportunities. Remember them in your prayers.

Halloween is over for another year and I suspect that this will be the last time we'll have a child go trick o' treating. For the last two years our ward has done the trunk or treat routine at the church parking lot and that has been nice although it isn't quite as exciting for the kids. For home evening on Monday we carved three jack-o-lanterns and I took one to put on the trunk of my car while I handed out goodies. But, the wind was so ferocious that the only way I could keep it lit was to put it in the trunk. I had a windbreaker on and I was so cold that I nearly climbed in the trunk with the pumpkin to keep warm. The terrible weather seems to be another Idaho Halloween tradition that we have lived with for years and necessitates several layers of clothing beneath the costumes. It is always fun to see the kids dressed up, though, especially the really tiny tots.

In conjunction with Halloween SaraKay had an afternoon dance at school on Wednesday. Each student was required to pay \$1.00 which entitled them to a dance card which got them in to the dance and refreshments. Each student had to have at least five dances signed by a member of

the opposite sex to qualify to attend the dance. I'm sure that this was so the kids would dance once they got in although it didn't work as well as the teachers had hoped. Sara Kay said that a lot of kids couldn't find the boys who had signed their cards and hence they didn't dance with them. (SaraKay says, " And I'm glad!") I'm sure that some of the boys were hiding out to avoid having to dance. (SaraKay: I hated the slow dances because you had to hold their hand.)

I still remember Tim's first dance. He was at the junior high school and unbeknownst to me he had taken with him a sample of men's cologne. Prior to the dance he went into the restroom to put some on and his friends thought they should have some and in the midst of the nonsense, it got spilled all over Tim. Not to be deterred, he still attended the dance but it soon became obvious that he had a very strong odor about him and several of the girls refused to dance with him because he was so nauseating! Of course, his retelling of the whole affair when he arrived home that day was embellished a little so I'm not exactly what was fact and what was fiction, but he still smelled potent enough that I could only imagine how strong it had been several hours earlier. Perhaps this early experience at dancing was why Tim seemed to have an aversion for dancing for much of his teen years.

Several years ago, the summer before Tim's junior year, he and I went on the stake Pioneer Trek. Tim was in another family and so I didn't get to see a lot of him but never-the-less I did check in with him periodically throughout the three-day experience. The evening of the second day we were camped in a big meadow and there were a lot of corrals that were used by the ranchers when they had their round-ups at the conclusion of the summer grazing season. The entire day had been spent doing all sorts of fun pioneer games and competitions and the evening activities included wrestling contests and old-fashioned dancing.

Since I was a lone woman on the Trek with Daddy at home taking care of SaraKay, I sat on the corral fence with other women and watched as the round dancing began. Initially I had been skeptical that such an activity would work with the youth but within about fifteen minutes they had hundreds of kids and their partners kicking up their heels and dancing all kinds of dances. The longer the activity went on the more kids that became involved. Anyone showing any hesitancy was coaxed, encouraged, and dragged into the enclosure to join the fun. It was a wonderful sight

and it seemed to gain momentum with each new dance.

Part way through the festivities I started looking around trying to spot Tim. Several of the dances were round dances and so a parade of participants was passing in front of me as I perched on the fence. I became aware that I really could not see Tim at all. Janeil Albertson, the aunt in Tim's Trek family walked by and asked who he was dancing with. It was then that I made a real effort to spot him among the hundreds of dancers and came to the conclusion that he was nowhere to be found.

This prompted me to take a stroll around the area and low and behold! who should I find with a group of other chickens, (I mean boys) but Tim and some of his friends, hiding behind one of the coral fences, sitting the dance out! I couldn't believe it! Upon realizing that he had been discovered, Tim begged for mercy and pleaded with me to let him stay hidden. He did not want to dance! So I returned to my place on the fence and enjoyed the rest of the evening despite Tim's absence. Well, I better close. I've got to start thinking about Thanksgiving and the fun we're going to have. I wish we were living in a day when technology would permit us to "hie to Kolob in a twinkling of an eye" and that all of us could gather despite the distances and enjoy fellowship together! Love all of you. Mom

[Dad] Yesterday was supposed to be a staff meeting and it was being held here in Blackfoot for a change. Just as I was ready to leave, I received a phone call from Robert Fawcett that he had an emergency and needed my help. A 6'x12' Featherlite cargo trailer that the council owns, held the 15 tables from the Idaho Falls office that were used at the University of Scouting on Saturday. It was parked over the weekend at Steve Nelson's place on the other side of Blackfoot. Robert had hooked on to it and just started to pull out into the street and both wheels snapped off at the same time. So, I changed clothes and arranged for a trailer and went in to help. We maneuvered the trailer around to where we could pull it up on another big flatbed trailer and haul it off to be fixed. I am always grateful for my experiences on the farm in such circumstances, and being able to figure out how to solve problems and accomplish what initially may seem to be the impossible.

Sunday night we had a Larsen FHE at Rick and Terry's in Pocatello. We visited, played

Scattergories, ate some wonderful Terry refreshments and had a great time together. We sure would like to have had Gary and Linda join us along with those of their family in the area. Saturday was the University of Scouting and Cub Scout Pow Wow at the Snake River High and Junior High Schools. We had nearly 500 Scouters in attendance at a wide variety of classes from wood carving, Dutch oven cooking, successful ceremonies, making capotes, and so on. It was a great success but involves a lot of work with the setup and cleanup and support during the day. We had a Wood Badge display in the midway in the gym at the Jr High and were anxiously engaged in recruiting participants for our four courses for next year. Our goal is 202 participants in 2002.

Last Tuesday was our Bi-stake Harvest dance and we hosted the 12-13 year-old's. It was a great dance and everyone had a wonderful time. The key to the success of it was the involvement of our youth in planning and carrying it out. They were wonderful! It is exciting to see the capabilities of our youth when they are willing to take the initiative and responsibility to carry out the activities that are planned for their benefit.

Thursday night was Stake Council meeting and afterward, Pres. Van Orden pulled me aside and told me that they were changing the Stake YW and YM presidencies at stake conference this coming weekend. We suspected the YW were going to be changed because they have been in for 6 years. But it was a surprise to find out they were changing the YM also. We have only been in 3 years.

[Mom] In January of this year, on the first day of the Legislative session, the Senator from our district, Jerry Twiggs, died of a heart attack. As chairman of the precinct committee, Daddy had the task of organizing the meeting where Jerry's replacement was selected. As some of you will recall, several people suggested that Daddy run for the state senate seat that had been vacated. Daddy approached his boss about the possibility of taking some time off in January and February for legislative responsibilities but Kim said that he felt the time involved in Boise would be incompatible with his job. We both felt that it would be foolish this close to retirement to jeopardize our situation with the BSA so we dismissed the idea. It made me sad that our situation was such that he couldn't take advantage of the opportunity.

I guess that is one reason I am so pleased with this new calling. I know that he will enjoy the wonderful associations that he will have and it will be a rewarding challenge for him. It was hard for us to keep the secret after he was called on Tuesday night, but we felt that so many of you have connections in the Blackfoot area that the information might leak out by accident and we would have felt badly if it had. We also knew that we would be gathering for Thanksgiving and that the distances involved and small children would make it hard to come both times.

Sunday morning we were pretty emotional as we sat in the congregation and heard his name read. I felt like my heart was going to pound right out of my chest. Following conference many people expressed their support and approval and some even said, "We had you picked." When I talked with Shauntel later that afternoon, she made a comment that reflected my feelings. She said, "The sweetest thing about receiving a call to serve in the church is that you feel a confirmation that the Lord is pleased with what you are doing and trusts you."

Saturday morning we called both sets of parents with the news and decided that we would call you children later. We finished up the Saturday evening leadership session by 9 and then quickly attended a wedding reception for a ward member before arriving home about 9:30. We realized that those in the Midwest were probably already in bed for the night and so we called some of you in our time zone. For one reason or another, we weren't able to get to some of you that night. Before Daddy left for his early morning meetings, he asked me to call the rest of you. I dialed John and Laurel and got an answering machine. Just then I heard SaraKay calling me and I went in her bedroom to find her sick with the stomach flu. She was feverish and throwing up. For the next hour I was involved with her, trying to get her well enough to attend stake conference with us. When the time arrived to leave, I decided that if she got to feeling better by 9:00 that she was to walk over and join us. I really didn't think she would make it.

Part way through the first session during the rest song, someone tapped me on the shoulder and I turned around and there was Bonnie with Nathan. Their family had made a quick trip from Logan that morning and arrived a little late to conference and they were sitting in the back of the session. At some point SaraKay had come and joined them since she couldn't locate us. Anyway, we had a wonderful day with them here and when Daddy

was set apart, Steve was able to be in the circle. Following the blessing Bonnie and I came home and had lunch while Daddy stayed to assist in the other setting aparts. He was really tired when he finished that and had temple recommend interviews later that night. He did make it home to visit with Steve and Bonnie before they left for Logan. We appreciated having them here.

Later that night after things had quieted down Daddy and I had a chance to visit about the happenings of the day. I almost hated to see it end because it had been such a sweet feeling. Once in a while life gives us a payday and it's fun to remember it when things get back to normal, as they always do.

Becky said that it would be alright for me to mention that she is expecting a baby the first of May. She has told some of the family but she was going to write a family letter announcing the news but hasn't gotten to it. She hasn't been as sick and that has been nice. She still has to be pretty careful about what she does and pace herself as well as eat substantial amounts every two hours to stay on her feet. Tate is up and walking now and so proud of himself. Just gaining that ability has made such a difference in his life and he is pleased to be one of the big boys now. He continues to receive physical and speech therapy and is starting to say a few words.

November 13, 2001

[Dad] Monday was a great day for Sue; so many of you remembered her birthday with calls and sweet sentiments in your cards and even some wonderful new pictures. We were able to go to "Fiddler On The Roof" in Idaho Falls. It was an absolutely wonderful production and we enjoyed it so much. SaraKay knows it so well she could point out a couple of instances when the actors said the wrong thing. It was a late night, but an insightful one as we pondered the message of the role of family and traditions and our relationship with God and our religion.

The biggest news of the week happened Sunday in stake conference as I was sustained as the 2nd counselor in the stake presidency. Tuesday night President Shipley called and asked if I could come over to the stake office and meet with him. I was just leaving to go out with the missionaries and had to defer until after 9:00. He asked if I would bring my wife with me. It was a sweet experience to receive the call from the First Presidency via Pres. Shipley to serve as a counselor in the stake presidency. It was also a confirmation of some

strong feeling I had had for about two months. I have included as an attachment, the text of my remarks on Sunday after being released as Stake YM President and sustained in this new assignment. It was gratifying to have so many dear friends congratulate me and express their confidence in my ability to fulfill this new call. I still feel humbled and intimidated by the responsibilities but know that with the Lord's help I can do what is required, and even more. We had two sessions of Stake Conference with four wards assigned to come at 9:00 and the other four at 12:00. The priesthood leadership session was that morning at 7:00 and after the second session we had to set apart three new high councilors, a new councilor in the stake SS, and new YM and YW presidencies. In addition, we had to sign temple recommends that night. So all in all, it was a full day.

The new YM presidency is Bryce Ellis, Dale Wheelwright, Paul Thompson, with Brother Tominaga as secretary. The new YW presidency is Lori Cammack, Jan Wray, Paula Marshall, and Venus Clark as secretary. They will be great! I remember Dad saying once that the greatest reward of leadership is seeing the growth in those that are called to serve; I am looking forward to that experience.

Stake Conference Talk: I am grateful for the opportunity of serving in the Stake Young Men's presidency with such great leaders as Dan Wallace, Tracy Lake, Damon Orr, and for a short time with Scott Rogers. I'm also grateful for the opportunity of serving with the YW Presidency led by Karen Esplin and all the things that I've learned from them. Most of all I'm thankful for the support of my family and especially my eternal companion, Susan. Thank you for your sustaining vote for this new responsibility. I'm humbled by the magnitude of this calling and grateful for your trust in me. I also appreciate the vote of confidence of President Shipley and President Van Orden and Heavenly Father for extending this call to serve. I know the origination of this call is from Him. He knows our hearts and minds and sees in us much greater capacity than we see in ourselves. Through the circumstances of our lives He molds and shapes us according to specifications of His eternal plan.

This summer, Kendall Wray rented our pasture for fattening up four Holstein calves. One of those calves was always checking out the fence line. If he found a weakness, he would exploit it and escape. Sometimes he would take a companion

with him. His disposition just seemed to be one of not being satisfied with the position he was in! In the Book of Mosiah we read of King Benjamin's talk to his people as they gathered around the temple in Zarahemla. They were stirred by his words and cried, 'Oh have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive remission of our sins. The Spirit of the Lord came upon them and they were filled with joy.' That joy was primarily a sign that they had been forgiven of their sins. In addition, they experienced a "peace of conscience" and were "filled with the love of God. They didn't "have a mind to injure one another." Nor would they permit their children to "transgress the laws of God and fight and quarrel one with another". They were filled with a desire to help each other and impart of their substance for those in need.

At the conclusion of King Benjamin's address, we read in Mosiah5:2 that the people believed all his words, and they experienced a mighty change of heart and had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." We too can become a millennial people of one heart and one mind by diligently applying the Savior's atonement in our lives. The purpose of the Stake Themes we have had over the last several years is to shape and mold our dispositions so that we can become like the people of King Benjamin's time. We too can experience a mighty change of heart and have no more disposition to do evil as we develop a Christlike disposition. I'm particularly grateful for the opportunity to work with the youth of this stake. We have such wonderful young people and I love them. As I have reviewed the new materials announced at general conference regarding the youth I have seen the inspiration in causing our young men and young women to stretch to fulfill their duty to God.

I would like to share with you some of the message from the First Presidency in the handbook each Deacon, Teacher, and Priest will receive. Remember, these are God's chosen prophets speaking directly to each of our young men. "You live in a day of great challenges and opportunities. You have been called to make a difference in the world. As a son of God, with the power of the Aaronic Priesthood you can be a wonderful force for good. The Lord believes in you and has an important mission for you to do. He will help you as you turn covenants that will prepare you for the temple. Work with your parents and leaders as you set goals and strive to achieve them. You will feel a great sense of

accomplishment as you fulfill your duty and prepare for the exciting challenges of the future."

This program is going to require a change in our way of doing things. It is going to require a change in our thought processes and patterns. It is going to reaffirm to parents their primary responsibility of teaching and supporting their sons and daughters. It is going to reaffirm the Church's role as a support and help for the family. The process will help to shape and mold our dispositions to be more compliant and remember the Savior in our lives and the power of the Atonement to change us for the better and make us keep sacred covenants. We will be blessed with the presence of the Spirit in our lives which will cultivate a disposition to do good.

I know that the Gospel is true. I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's tool for establishing the Kingdom of God here on the earth in the latter days. I know that we are led by a marvelous prophet raised up for the needs and challenges of our day. May we each be obedient and develop a Christlike disposition.....

[Mom] On Thursday afternoon and Friday I substituted at the middle school. For the most part I got along okay. It's fun to widen my circle of friends especially among the children. I see a wonderful spark of divinity in each of them and hope I can be a positive influence in their lives. It's difficult to keep focused on my home responsibilities, though, and I'm trying not to let my teaching negatively effect my home duties and concerns. I am so excited for next week and the time we'll have together. We love you and pray that you will be equal to the challenges placed before you.

November 20, 2001

[Mom] I'm going to make this letter short. I'm headed to the dentist this morning and this afternoon SaraKay has a strings concert that I'm going to be attending at the high school. Although she isn't officially a member of the middle school strings group, whenever they perform, they invite her to join them and it has been a good arrangement. She had a recital for both her piano and her violin Saturday.

The Harry Potter weekend came and went and life goes on. It has been fun to be a part of it and share in the excitement. A couple of years ago Daddy attended a conference in California and the guest speaker said that anyone who works with

children in any capacity needs to read the HP books so they can understand and relate to the kids. At the time I thought it was an interesting viewpoint but since my opportunity to substitute at the middle school, it has made a lot of sense. It has been fun to be able to converse with the kids about the books and upcoming movie and to feel like I knew a little about what they were so excited about. I don't go a lot but last week I had such a busy week that it was hard for me to give up my Friday for a sub job and then try to make up for lost time at home on Saturday. I was really tired by Saturday night. I guess I'll have to see how I get along and decide if it's feasible for me to continue.

My lesson on Sunday was one of my favorites. Just as we walked into the room at the beginning of class, the power went out! I taught the entire lesson in semi-darkness. We opened the curtains but never-the-less it was a challenge to read scriptures or do anything requiring much light. It turned out to be one of my best lessons—lots of good participation and spirit. It is such a joy to teach the gospel!

(When Harriett Clark introduced Sue after the opening prayer she said, "Even though we'll be in the dark, I'm sure Sue will enlighten us.")

The pace of Daddy's life has picked up considerably and his schedule is getting more and more congested. Last night we had people come for temple recommends interviews and that was fun. It has been very satisfying to have people comment and congratulate and express love and support. I know that he is feeling a little overwhelmed right now with it all but with time he'll get his duties learned and it will seem more manageable.

Having Daddy in the stake presidency has been very interesting. Last night when he came out of his office after an interview, he stopped in the living room where I was visiting with the Rogers and I looked at him and I sensed the mantle of his calling upon him. It wasn't really a physical thing but more a spiritual presence that seemed to radiate from his being and transform him into something finer than has been before. I've pondered on it since and been led to wonder about it and rejoice in this opportunity for him to be magnified and enlarged as he moves forward with this calling.

Our prayers are with each of you. My thoughts have especially been with Steve in his job search, Tim in the field, Mike in his rigorous program, and

Becky with her pregnancy. I'm sure that the rest of you face your challenges every day and wonder sometimes why life gets so crazy and frustrating. I know the Lord is aware of us but that life was meant to stretch us and try our faith. May you feel of our love and more importantly of His love in supporting you in all your righteous endeavors.

[Dad] At this Thanksgiving time I would like to start with a quotation from Tecumseh, a great Shawnee Chief: When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food, and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies with yourself. I am so grateful for the many blessings God has showered on us. For BYU pulling it out at the last minute to keep their winning streak going, for Snake River beating Lake for the State Football Title, for having a satisfying Sabbath over and so on... Seriously, my greatest feelings of gratitude swell when I think of my family, each of you and your faithfulness, your love and support. I have had the opportunity of speaking with some of my siblings the last couple of weeks and am grateful for the feelings of love and unity that I have felt.

My Church calling continues to stretch me and break me out of some of the lazy habits I have gotten into like a Sunday nap, leisurely perusing the Sunday paper or reading a book. But it is rewarding to feel like maybe I can make a difference because of the training and experience I bring to the table. Sunday morning started with presidency meeting at 7:00 and then I played Howard W. Hunter in the Primary program for sacrament meeting in our ward. We had a YM/YW correlation meeting, a meeting with our Youth Committee to plan the New Year's dance and the Priesthood Preview. I had the opportunity to make a house call to interview a home-bound couple that like to maintain a current recommend even though they probably won't be able to use it.

Work wise, I had a telephone conference call with representatives of all the councils from Endowment Council to discuss plans for the National Art Show to be sponsored by the Utah National Parks Council and to be held in January at Thanksgiving Point. We have some concerns about the distance and traveling conditions.

The night before was the Holiday Auction in Idaho Falls. There wasn't nearly the crowd and there were a few pretty good deals. We probably ended up around \$20,000 for the night. On Wednesday night, we decided on the spur of the moment to go

to the Snake River/Blackfoot girls' basketball game. We got beat, but barely. It was fun to be a part of the crowd! I think 3/4 of the Snake River School District was there. We had Mandy Jenks from our ward on the team and Holly Alexander was a mainstay on the Blackfoot team.

We're looking forward to Wednesday and going to Harry Potter, even though Josh, Katie, and Sam and SaraKay will have already seen it once, SaraKay is able to go with a group of advanced readers from the school to see a special showing of it tomorrow morning.

November 27, 2001

Last week was an exciting week. Steph and Linds and family arrived Wednesday about lunch time. Afterwards, Steph & Sue baked pies while the rest of us went to Idaho Falls to see Harry Potter. Linds and their kids had seen it already. SaraKay had seen it the day before with the advanced readers from her school. I was the only one that hadn't seen it before, but we all thoroughly enjoyed it. My favorite parts were the Quidditch match and the Chess game. I thought the settings, Hogwarts Express, and the effects were great. I loved Hagrid and Professor Dumbledore. The show was very much in line with the visual images I had as I read the books.

As soon as the show was over, we had to hustle back because I had a High Council meeting. A few miles south of Idaho Falls on the freeway we passed a wreck that had just barely occurred that was starting to back up traffic. There weren't any emergency vehicles there yet, but eventually there were about 40 and traffic was re-routed through Shelley and we found out there were 2 people killed in the accident.

That night Chet and Becky came down to join in the festivities as Dave and Andrea and Paul and Jenny arrived. It was a fun visiting reunion time as we all gathered. Thursday morning Steve and Bonnie joined us and the party really got into high gear. We had the annual volleyball game at the Church and I was impressed with the improvement in the grandkids that were playing. It was fun to include them in the Larsen volleyball marathon.

I had framed some "Return with Honor" calligraphy that I was able to deliver to the members of the YM and YW presidencies that I have been serving with. They really appreciated the token of thanks and remembrance and I was glad I had made the extra effort to visit with each of them.

Friday, Steve and Bonnie left as well as Steph and Linds. That night we went to Idaho Falls and had dinner with Becky and Chet. Saturday, Dave and Andrea headed back to Boise and Paul and Jenny stayed until Sunday afternoon. It was a bit chaotic when everyone was here, but I am grateful for our large home to be able to accommodate everyone. The grandkids are all such a joy to us! It is fun to watch them grow.

Sunday was another full day starting at 7:00 with presidency meeting, going to Moreland 4th to change a counselor in the bishopric, back to Moreland 3rd to change the high priest group leadership, Sunday School and Priesthood in Moreland 6th, choir practice, home teachers, final planning meeting with YM presidency for training meeting this Thursday, Temple Recommend interviews, and phone calls interspersed between all the meetings and activities. Thanks to Sue, I was still able to get a fifteen-minute power nap. I can certainly see that Sundays are not my own any more. But there are certainly rewards for all the intensity and service and I am eternally grateful for my faithful family and the time we have had together over Thanksgiving. Love, DAD

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy's summary of our weekend. On Wednesday afternoon I received a phone call from a seminary teacher in Blackfoot. He was needing a teacher for Monday and Tuesday of this week. I told him that those weren't good days for me since we have early release on Monday and music lessons on Tuesday. He said that because of trimester testing that was going on, the school days would be shortened and I would be able to fulfill my other commitments. I agreed to sub for him and within the hour he had dropped off the materials. He was headed to Canada for a family wedding and had had a difficult time finding a substitute. I thought that I would be able to handle it, but it was pretty stressful worrying about the holiday, preparing for my Sunday lesson and having things ready for two days in the classroom. Needless to say, it feels good to have it over and have a few free days ahead in which I can catch my breath.

We thoroughly enjoyed the holiday. When Steph and Linds arrived on Wednesday Steph said that they had reserved a room at a motel in town since they knew we were going to have a crowd and they thought we might be short bedrooms. I thought that I had accounted for everyone in my planning, but when we had everyone here on Thursday night and we were getting kids down for the night, I knew that Linds had been inspired in

his decision. We had such a crowd! Fortunately, we all got along fine and I think everyone got a pretty good night's rest.

Friday night when we went to Becky and Chet's, Becky mentioned that by the time they left to go home on Thursday night, Chet had shell shock from the crowd. We all had a good laugh with him about it. At one point in the day, he had tried to find one spot, one bed, one anywhere to have a quiet moment and he said that there were people in every inch of the house. I knew just what he was talking about. It really gets chaotic with that many bodies especially when so many of them are small, active children. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed at the numbers we are dealing with but we are grateful for each one of you and appreciate your efforts to be with us.

I also appreciated all the work that each of you did to make the holiday so special. Everyone contributed food, helped with dishes, picked up after themselves, and really lightened my load in so many ways. Wednesday afternoon Steph and I spent about eight hours cooking pies, rolls, and other things for the festivities. Before David and Andrea left on Saturday morning they went through the basement like the traditional "white tornado" cleaning, changing bed linens, vacuuming and getting things restored to order. Thanks to all of you for your consideration and help.

Several times I thought about those of you who are far away doing your own celebrating; know how much we missed you! I appreciate Shaunte! and Randy's efforts to accommodate Mike and some of his friends and help them have a good holiday.

Daddy is home teaching tonight and has interviews here later. His life has really gotten more complicated with his new assignment but he is enjoying it and I know the stake members enjoy him.

December 4, 2001

[Dad] The time is flying by so fast—it seems like Christmas will be here before we know it. I was able to get the plastic up on our patio door last night to cut some of the wind. It seems to make quite a difference along with closing vents and shutting doors downstairs. For home evening last night we put together a mailing for my work and then played Boggle and Uno.

We had a great Sunday and even had a chance to practice "Hallelujah" from the Messiah with a

stake choir and will be performing it next Sunday as a part of the Stake Christmas Choir concert. We enjoyed the First Presidency Christmas Devotional and were so impressed with how they had the conference center staged for the event. The Mo Tab Choir is always so awesome and when you couple it with the orchestra accompaniment it seems so "right" for Christmas. It sounds like the choir will be getting a good workout during the Olympics. What a wonderful showpiece for the Church!

Last Saturday we had the opportunity of attending a VIP showing of "The Other Side of Heaven"—a show based on the book "In the Eye of the Storm" by John Groberg telling of his experiences as a missionary in the kingdom of Tonga in the early 50's. It is a wonderful portrayal of his experiences and a film that everyone should see if they get a chance. We were in great company with President and Sister Bednar and many other prominent Church and Civic leaders from the area. John's parents, Delbert & Jennie Groberg were there (former IF Temple Pres.) along with several of his siblings. It starts out at a BYU dance in 1953 as he is anticipating his call. He really has some incredible experiences with healings, storms, rats eating the soles of his feet, and so on. The growth he experiences brings to mind the influence of missions on our sons and daughter. Those two years (two and one half for Elder Groberg) are at a pivotal time in your lives. We are getting excited about talking with Tim at Christmas time. After the show we went to Sara Kay's next to the last Jazz Basketball game. She had about 1/3 of the points of the whole team and did a great job on defense and offense with steals, rebounds, and assists.

Last Thursday night was my YM Training night that we have been working on for quite a while. I had a talk in the opening exercises and a major presentation in each of the YM and YW's breakout sessions. Everything went well and the over 80 people we had in attendance were well fed, physically and spiritually. At 8:30, we had a team building experience planned, but I made an executive decision to close and send everyone home rather than have a more protracted evening away from their families.

On Wednesday, I went to a funeral for a friend, the husband of Lanta Freeman who works in the IF Scout Office. It was a lovely service, with hymns, the gospel taught, and just over an hour long. On Sunday, he didn't feel well enough to go to Church but wanted to get his home teaching visit made to a shut-in couple that they have been home

teaching for 13 years. He died forty-five minutes later.

Thursday was also a meeting with my Investment Committee which oversees the investments of the endowment funds of the council. We met with our trustee who is actually doing the investing based on our guidelines and policy.

For our birthdays, Chet & Becky took us to Michael Maclean's "Forgotten Carols" on Wednesday night. That was a delightful experience! It is the first time we have gone to the production which has been coming through the area for the past ten years. I love some of the carols like "Homeless" and the Innkeepers song. But I like hearing Uncle Rick sing the Innkeepers song best of all—I am biased, but I like his voice better and definitely resonate with the spirit as he sings from the heart.

[Mom] Daddy has given a wonderful recap of last week's activities. I appreciate that since I have been running around like the proverbial chicken with my head cut off, trying to get things decided on, purchased, wrapped, and mailed to those of you who live away. Although we are planning to visit several families during the holidays, the stormy winter weather that we continue to experience has me a little worried that our plans could be changed. Daddy reassures me that he doesn't mind driving in bad weather, but I'm still concerned.

Daddy failed to mention that he will probably be going in for surgery next week on his ACL. For those of you who don't know what that is, it is the ligament that is behind the knee which supports the movement of the leg as it bends and flexes. Dad has been so faithful with his daily exercise routine that this injury has been discouraging. While we were visiting Steph and Linds last October he took his gym clothes and shoes so that he could get up early and do his walking. He left the house before it was completely light and didn't realize that there was an additional step about two paces from the front steps of their home. He missed the step and took a tumble that landed him on his knee. For several days he watched it closely and felt fortunate that it seemed to be okay.

Then, gradually it began to ache and stiffen on him and he finally went to see an orthopedic surgeon last week and received the prognosis that he would need surgery to repair it. The good news was that the doctor said that there wasn't any ancillary damage and that he would probably be in

a rigid cast for a week and then an athletic cast after that.

The annual Larsen Christmas party will be held here on Sunday, December 23rd. I need to know if any of the Idaho/Utah bunch are planning on coming. I know Mike will fly in the day before and that Paul and Jenny will be celebrating with the Johnsons that day. Becky and Chet may already be in Utah with the Seely's but I wasn't sure about the Logan bunch. There again, the weather is so uncertain I know it may be a last-minute decision.

Christmas morning we will be here at home until about noon. We plan to drive that afternoon to Boise, arriving at about supper time. On the 26th we will leave early afternoon for Logan and Steve and Bonnie arriving about supper time. We will spend the night with them leaving the next day early afternoon for Steph and Linds' place. We will spend the night of the 27th with Steph and Linds and return home the afternoon of the 28th. Paul and Jenny will arrive the 28th and spend the weekend, returning to Provo on Sunday afternoon. Mike may follow them back in our car to visit some girl friends in the Salt Lake area.

Steve flies out on the 28th and will be gone for 7 days installing a system back east. I am planning on visiting Bonnie and helping out. Steve said that the travel plans were both good news and bad. Good because the next quarter's round of layoffs come while he is out of town on a job and that pretty much ensures that they aren't planning on letting him go; bad because these long trips are so hard on Bonnie with her delivery date growing close. It's nice to live close enough that we can be of service.

I was visiting with my walking buddies this morning and we were talking about the upcoming Olympics. There was an article in the Church News outlining some of the involvements of the Tabernacle Choir, especially in the opening ceremonies. It said that 3.8 billion people will be watching the opening ceremonies! Pretty good coverage!

December 11, 2001

[Mom] I'm waiting for a call from Daddy this morning. He had an appointment with the orthopedic surgeon to discuss what needs to be done with his leg. He had an MRI last Thursday and he will have more information after he meets with Dr. Jones today. We are hoping that he can have surgery tomorrow and get the healing process started.

(Dad just called and said that the news is good! Instead of having a torn ACL that would have required extensive surgery, the MRI showed that he has a torn meniscus (the cartilage that supports the knee) and that the surgery can be done arthroscopically. This will involve less time in the hospital, less cost for us, and an easier recovery. He will have it done this Thursday and be able to be home that night.

Last Saturday morning Daddy had the privilege of releasing Carlos Baldwin from his mission. President Shipley usually does this for returning missionaries but he was not available and asked Daddy to do it. We were thrilled since Carlos is one of Tim's friends and we have had sweet feelings for him for many years. When he arrived, we visited with him for a few minutes before he went into the office with Daddy for his interview and release. He told us that he was supposed to have arrived in Idaho Falls Friday evening and that his whole family (nearly 50 people) were waiting at the airport. The plane came in on time but because of fog circled the airport and headed back to Salt Lake. Carlos was heartsick but was helpless to do anything but get off the plane in Salt Lake and make connections to go to a relative's home in Logan and wait for someone to come get him. His brother, Cole, made the trip and delivered him home at 4 a.m. to his mom and dad who were sleeping in the living room awaiting his arrival. It was pretty emotional to visit with him. He was worn out and was 50 pounds lighter than when he left two years ago. Carlos sent greetings to John and Laurel from President Sowell who was his mission president until last July when he and his wife were released and returned to Provo (one week after John and Laurel moved to Michigan.) Daddy and I have both been pretty homesick for Tim. This Thursday Tim's best friend, Chad Christensen, returns and both he and Carlos will be reporting their missions next Sunday. Seven months to go.

I think that I am going to accept a job offer that I received last Friday. Steve Adams, who is principal of the small charter school in Blackfoot, called and offered me a job as an aide. I will be working 20 hours a week, four hours a day. My hours will be 8:30 am to noon and I will mainly be doing reading and math tutoring. I think this is something that will work for me and allow me to be home when SaraKay is home. I have been pretty apprehensive about it but I have prayed that if it was okay for me to work that a job would open up that would fit my situation.

Last night was our annual stake Christmas concert. It was satisfying for me to attend and perform with our ward choir. I was very pleased to see that the new stake music chairman is continuing the tradition of an annual concert that I began six or seven years ago. During my time as chairman, I did three things that have had an impact on the quality of the choirs in the stake: The first thing was establish a stake music library where all the wards stored their music when they weren't using it. I cataloged it according to SSA or SATB, Christmas, and then alphabetized it and prepared folders and a place in the stake library that would be available to all the wards. Although the church generally does not recommend doing this because some stakes are so spread out and it would be a problem for some wards to have access to the music, our stake buildings are all within a three-mile radius and the library is open and accessible for several hours each Sunday.

The second thing was to establish two choir festivals a year, at Christmas and then in the spring. Each ward was asked to perform two numbers. At first some of the wards had just a handful of participants, but the concerts acted as a stimulus and last night every ward choir had at least 20 people and some, more.

The third thing was to provide a stake organ class for anyone who was interested. It ran for two months on Saturdays, January-February. We had good attendance and it upgraded the music in our meetings. It was interesting to note last night that only three of the numbers performed weren't already in the library so I know that the directors are using that as a resource and saving themselves time and the church, money.

[Dad] Thanks for remembrances on my birthday--the calls, cards, and gifts. I love each of you so much and appreciate all you do to make me feel special. We even heard from Tim today--as he wrote to wish Mom a happy birthday. We have been making pecan logs to give to our home teaching and visiting teaching families and companions and others. It has been fun to work on them together and work out a system that wasn't so hard on Sue to get them produced. Tonight we are going to a company party and taking one for our exchange. Each couple is supposed to bring something they have made and send the recipe for it to Teddy (the secretary in Idaho Falls) so she could put together a recipe book for everyone and then we will exchange the finished product with another couple tonight.

I too, thrilled with the stake choir festival last night. It is a thrill to see how much better each of the wards are doing with their choirs. At the conclusion anyone who desired was invited to join together on the stand to sing Handel's "Hallelujah". It was so powerful with all those strong voices.

December 18, 2001

[Mom] Paul called last week with the exciting news that their firstborn will be a daughter--carrying on the tradition in the family of firstborns being girls! Becky and Chet don't know yet what they are having, but Steve and Bonnie's little girl will have at least one girl cousin her age and maybe more!

The other good news of the week is that Daddy's surgery went well and he has been up and about the last couple of days. I think he may have overdone it yesterday, trying to meet his commitments. He is using a cane which has given him some added stability. Last night his knee was aching but he got up and left for work this morning so we'll see how he gets along. Dr. Jones said that the surgery was routine and went as planned. He told Daddy to move ahead with his exercising just as soon as he feels like it. His diabetes is the unknown as far as healing is concerned, but so far, so good.

Last night we were sitting having scripture time when the phone rang and SaraKay answered it and handed it to me. When the person on the line said, "Hi, Mom." I thought that it was Mike. Then I realized it was Tim. He was calling to set up a time for his Christmas call next week. What a fun surprise. He sounded like he was in the next room, the reception was so clear. It was a great time for him to call because I had lots of news after attending Chad and Carlos's welcome home meetings and sitting next to Janalee during Carlos'. I knew I couldn't say much since this wasn't our "official" call but it was fun to share a little of the hometown news with him. He sounded upbeat and content and reported that he had received the packages and cards that had been sent for Christmas. We will be calling him on the 24th. I'm probably going to invite Janalee to come over and share some talk time. She has been faithful in writing him and I know he has been good to keep in touch with her.

Our ward Christmas party was Saturday night. It was such a thrill to see the efforts of the ward members in involving their friends and neighbors within our boundaries who normally don't attend.

Anyway, it was very sweet to rub shoulders with these good people and to see the fellowshipping going on. I had my own missionary experience on Thursday evening. I called Colleen Winder to see if they were still going to hold the concert with the weather so bad and she said they were. She also commented that Claudia Luna had called and needed a ride to the concert. She is a Hispanic student who the school recruited to play the bass in the strings program. Since her parents couldn't pick her up after school when the strings program practices, Artje Crumley has been driving her home twice a week after practice, which is quite a labor of love considering that Artje lives in Pingree and Claudia lives on the Riverside Highway next to Mets Diesel.

Well, to make a long story short, I offered to pick up Claudia for the concert. As I was getting ready to go, I got to thinking about Claudia's family and realized that maybe some of them would like to go, too, so I called her back and her mother readily agreed to come along. Daddy was not going because of his surgery so I had plenty of room. I had also volunteered to take SaraKay's violin teacher's nine-year-old son who plays the violin since his mother couldn't attend.

When we picked up Claudia and her mother, I did my best to communicate with her in my poor Spanish and we had a great time. We were early for the concert and so we sat together and talked about a number of things. My other little charge, Jed, sat on one side and read his library book and then curled up on a pile of coats and slept through the whole concert, never hearing a single note.

In the course of the evening I was able to introduce Ophelia to several friends and she was the one to open the conversation up to religion. She mentioned that she wasn't a Catholic but a good Christian. She said that several of her friends had invited her to the Mormon church and she had some of her eight children who liked the Mormon church. She also was very happy to attend the concert and said that she especially loved the sound of the beautiful violins. All in all, it was a sweet night and I think I've made a new friend.

I just got off the phone with my Dad. He was in good spirits but he has quite a bad cold and cough. He has enjoyed Uncle Warren being close and I think it has given him some good companionship. The weather in Utah has been cold and snowy and Grandma struggles with the

confinement, but she continues to go see Grandpa each day.

Grandpa Larsen called yesterday and he is feeling better. He fell and cracked some ribs a couple weeks ago and so he has been in quite a bit of pain, but they are healing and he seems to be enjoying the warm weather in sunny Dixie. I know that this weekend when we host the Larsen party that we are going to miss him and AlvaLu. They have been such a delight over the years, but I've been glad they aren't here with the weather so unpredictable and stormy.

Christmas is nearly here and my preparations are nearly complete. I still have candy to make and a few gifts left to buy. My thoughts turn to each of you who are away and our prayers are with you during this holiday season. Hopefully your holiday will have sweet times of getting together with friends and time for reflection on the gift of the Savior's life and Atonement.

[Dad] Yes, my surgery is over and I am so grateful that it was able to be an orthoscopic repair of my meniscus, rather than an ACL reconstruction. My knee looks like I was bitten by a large three fanged snake. Most of the swelling has gone down and I have been blessed with a speedy recovery. I was able to do most of my exercise routine this morning and to walk upstairs normally. Sunday, I was able to attend all my meetings with the use of my cane. Much of Friday and Saturday were spent with my leg elevated and not much moving around. I have been really stingy with the pain pills and don't need them anymore. Yesterday at work, I spent almost five hours signing and making brief comments in Christmas cards that we are sending out with a thank you patch to council volunteers.

Yesterday was also a special treat as we were able to go with Bonnie Moon and some others to the geriatric ward at the State Hospital South and put on a little program and share some goodies and Christmas stockings. President Bowman played the piano as we sang and led them in a broad array of Christmas carols, a poem, and some scriptures. One of the attendants said they had often had visiting groups, but no one had ever sung with them before and that was a special treat. I think that did more to get me in the spirit of Christmas than anything we have done yet. I was so grateful for the blessings of the Gospel, the birth of the Savior, the Atonement, and all the physical blessings of home and family.

Orson Scott Card, in his preface to "Rebekah" said, "Given the story I have told in this book, it

seems appropriate for me to use these pages to thank God for letting me have the joy of all these children in my life. No one brings you more woe, more worry, or more rejoicing than your children. "Blessed is he who has a quiver full." I feel so richly blessed with a full quiver and rejoice with Paul and Jennie with their news of a daughter.

December 24, 2001

[Mom] Daddy, Mike, and SaraKay left a while ago to do some last minute shopping and I've had a little while to collect myself and make sure that I have the things I need for playing Santa. It's been fun to have Mike home, although his arrival was not without its problems.

His flight was scheduled to arrive in Idaho Falls at 11:07 pm on Saturday night. We arrived a few minutes earlier and found that even in Idaho Falls the terrorist attacks of Sept 11th have altered the way they do business. All the short-term parking was closed down and we were directed to a parking lot that had been opened up a considerable distance away. I offered to drop Daddy off at the front entrance of the airport but he thought his knee would be alright and so we parked and walked the distance, huddled together against the bitter cold.

When we entered the building, we were surprised to find that the whole area had been altered for security reasons and that we had to exit and reenter the building to get to the arrival area. Soon after we arrived, we were informed that the flight had been delayed in Salt Lake and would be arriving much later than scheduled. We decided to make the best of the situation and visited with others who were awaiting the same flight.

Finally, at about 1:00 am the flight arrived. Mike was the first one through the door, wearing a white T-shirt that had in big letters across the front: IOWA SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY. It was so good to have him arrive safely and we promptly went to get his luggage only to find out that like so many others on the flight, the luggage was still in Salt Lake. This necessitated another wait in a line to fill out forms in order to get it delivered the following day. By the time we arrived home, it was nearly 2 am and I suggested to Daddy that he should just shower and shave and get ready for his early morning meeting. He opt'd to get to bed and get a least a few hours' sleep before his day began. I awoke about 7, feeling like I'd been run over by a truck, but I got up and had a couple hours of quiet in which to complete my lesson for Sunday School.

[Dad] The highlight of this past week was being able to talk to Tim for a few minutes today. He sounded so good and didn't even have much of an accent. There was only one time he was struggling for the proper word in English. How long has it been since we had a Christmas without a missionary call? Based on what he has heard, he thinks his release is going to be around August 15th when he is released though he hasn't received official notice. We are about ready to leave on our traveling visits, so I'll sign off for now.

2002

January 1, 2002

[Mom] Our Christmas 2001 trip to Boise and Logan was really fun. Mike readily consented to go along with us and all the driving time gave us lots of hours in the car together to visit. It was so interesting to get a little glimpse into his daily activities at the school and in the LDS singles branch. We even had him give us a lecture on care of the teeth, interesting facts about tooth decay, and recommendations for the best brands of brushes and toothpaste. He has made some wonderful friends and Shauntel and Randy have been very good to him and helped him be a little less homesick.

We arrived about 5:00 pm in Boise on Christmas day and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to stay with David and Andrea. About 10:00 pm Daddy and I went to bed and Mike had some time with Dave and Andrea before they retired a while later.

We arrived at Steve and Bonnie's about five on the 26th and spent an enjoyable evening and morning with them before continuing on to Steph and Linds' that afternoon. It was so fun to get to see the wonderful Christmases that everyone had and recognize how blessed we are. Before our trip was over, we had played tennis, gone sledding, seen the movie "Lord of the Rings" and played ping pong to our hearts content.

By Friday afternoon we were on the road again after picking up Rachel, Nate, and Chrissy at Steve and Bonnie's before leaving for home. We arrived to get them just a few minutes before the shuttle was scheduled to arrive, picking up Steve and delivering him to the airport for his week-long installation job. We were grateful to be able to help out with the grandkids, although it did make for a pretty full carload. Luckily, SaraKay had her Harry Potter computer game and used Dad's laptop computer from work and that kept the troops pretty much entertained for the two-hour trip.

Saturday morning Paul and Jenny arrived and the party began all over again. Later on that day I took Rachel, Nathan, and Chrissy sledding at the junior high. I was amazed at the number of people that were enjoying the opportunity to play in the snow. There was a family cross-country skiing, several families sledding, one group with a snowmobile pulling sleds and a general feeling of fun. I know the kids really enjoyed the excitement of the slope

and before we were through, they were going down sitting, lying, and even crouching in the sleds. Although it was a cold day, the sun was out and we managed to stay warm.

Becky and Chet arrived about four and we celebrated with pizza, soda pop, and some delicious barbeque sausages that they contributed to the festivities. Following supper, we played games, a group went sledding, and Daddy and I chaperoned the stake youth dance for a couple of hours. Mike had a blind date with one of my old high school girl friends' daughter, Errolyn, and it was fun to make the connection with her. All in all, it made for a busy but fun afternoon and evening.

Sunday morning Mike left for Pocatello to attend his ISU ward and then drove to Provo for some commitments there. Paul and Jenny stayed through until Monday afternoon. I delivered the kids to the Bensons on Sunday afternoon and they were going to be with them until today when Kimball returned to Logan for school. We spent Sunday evening visiting with Paul and Jenny and getting the scoop from them on their activities. They were planning a New Year's Eve party with Mike and some old roommates and so they left about one Monday for Provo. Before leaving, they spruced up the downstairs and then tackled the job of helping SaraKay and me dismantle the Christmas tree and put away the decorations. They were such a big help and I really appreciated it. It is wonderful to see how happy they are and how excited for the upcoming arrival of their firstborn.

Last night SaraKay invited a friend over and we had a quiet New Year's Eve party with a couple of good videos, some crackers, a delicious cheese ball (from Janalee), and some take-out Chinese food. We've had a leisurely day and I have felt renewed and ready for my first day on the job tomorrow. It's a bit scary for me but we'll see how it goes.

[Dad] What a delightful and fun historic Christmas trip! As you can tell from Sue's letter, we had a great time and had some good quality time with each family. Our only regret was that we couldn't include each of the rest of you. I had to work on the 31st and then Dan and I had planned on completing the wall between my office and the other two offices next to it. There was about a foot of clearance left between the wall and ceiling and it prevented us from ever having a feeling of privacy. By the time we had completed framing it

up and putting on the sheet rock, I was feeling rather stove up. This morning, I could hardly move because of a sore back. I took some medication and ended up sleeping all afternoon. I feel bad about being such a wimp--it sure seems like my body is betraying my age despite my best efforts to consistently exercise and work out.

Sunday I was able to attend sacrament meetings where Alex Kneese and Doug Talbot reported their missions. It is always rewarding to see the growth and change in these young men as they serve the Lord for two years. They both did outstanding jobs in reporting the faith-promoting experiences of their missions and bearing testimony. Last night Janalee Thompson brought us over a plate with cheese ball and crackers--a thank you for letting her talk to Tim, I think. It is hard to realize that the holidays are over and we have to get back to work and school tomorrow in earnest.

January 7, 2002

[Mom] Several of you have ask regarding my new job. I started last Wednesday as a teacher's aide at the Blackfoot Charter School which is one block north of the Civic Center. It is an old church that is being rented by the district for use as a school until it can be more extensively remodeled. There are three classrooms with children grades K-5. I tutor reading, spelling, math, participate in a PE class, and work in the library. It gives me contact with most of the 50 students and a good variety of things to do.

The teachers are all very capable and the school has very good discipline. Aides are in and out of the rooms, pulling out individual students to help with various learning skills so the teacher/student ratio is about one teacher/one aide to 15 students. It makes for a very good environment. It has been relaxing for me to not have the preparation and presentation of the lesson, but to just work with the groups of students or individual students to which I am assigned. I am quickly learning their names and it's been gratifying to have the students respond to me in a positive way.

Everyone at the school is very nice. The students appear to be from poorer backgrounds and they are responsive and appreciative of all I do. The principal, Steve Adams, is very kind and all the staff are accommodating. I couldn't ask for a better situation. I leave at 8:10 am (Sara Kay leaves at 7:50) and I get home at 12:50 pm, eat lunch, take a nap, and regroup for when SaraKay gets here at 3:30. The biggest problem I have is

trying to keep up with my cleaning, but hopefully I can figure out how to be more efficient and do a little each day after work.

It seems very strange to drive off each morning, leaving behind my home. I have always enjoyed being in my home and taking care of things here. I especially enjoy cooking up the meals economically and finding ways to live within my budget. I am trying to be very truthful about the expenses of my job such as gas for the travel, wardrobe costs, etc. so that at the end of the school year I can take a look at it and see just exactly what I am making and assess if it is worth it to me. Another nice thing about this job is that I don't have to have a fancy wardrobe. Everyone dresses quite casually and I fit right in with the clothes I already have, so that has been a relief. Anyway, I am now a working girl and trying to see how I get along.

On another note, I received a phone call from Jonie last night. Several of you had called her last week and inquired about how she and her family were doing and she decided that she should try to get on chat occasionally to keep in touch and let everyone know that they are doing fine. She recently applied to work part-time at Alex's school and they hired her immediately. She helps with the domestic things such as sewing projects, cooking and other things. She gets to be creative with what projects she chooses for the kids and she is enjoying it. It is an added plus to be in the same school with Alex. She wishes that they would just use her part-time but for now the only opening was for full-time and so that is what she is doing. It was so good to hear from her!

As many of you are already aware, Mike's trip back to Iowa was a two-day marathon. He was scheduled to leave Idaho Falls on a three o'clock flight on Wednesday. Because of airport security, Becky dropped him off and then drove on home. The flight was cancelled and they (Mike and the Jones) waited around to catch a later flight which they discovered when they went to board, was filled to capacity. They called Becky and she retrieved them and took them home to have supper while Chet tried in vain to get them on some other flight to Salt Lake. But, it was a terrible day for traveling and they were stuck. When we found out what was going on, Daddy brought Mike home for the night and then the next afternoon he drove Mike back to catch the afternoon flight again. This time the flight was delayed and they arrived in Salt Lake three hours later than planned and had to make other

arrangements for their flight to Kansas City. They finally caught a flight and arrived in Kansas City at 2 am Friday morning. Although it was crazy, Mike realized how easy he had it compared to his friends, the Jones, who had a six-month-old baby who they were trying to keep happy throughout the ordeal.

The bright side of this story was that Katie, the girl Mike met in Provo last Monday, was at the airport Wednesday waiting to see him and when he called and told her that he wouldn't be coming at all that day, she arranged to meet him on Thursday. She waited the three hours until his flight finally arrived and then they had about an hour and a half together before he flew out. It gave them one more chance to visit and get better acquainted.

For those of you who don't know who Katie Williams is, I'll give you a little background. On Monday, January 30, Mike had a lunch blind date with Katie, a student that some of Mike's BYU friends had lined him up with. They went to lunch as planned and then Mike invited her to watch the BYU football game back at Steve Lan's apartment. Well, that date stretched into an invitation to go to Paul and Jenny's for Japanese cuisine. To make a long story short, Katie and Mike have hit it off and they are emailing daily and getting acquainted. Katie is a BYU graduate, sixth of seven children, and lives in Salt Lake. Last night on chat Mike outlined a list of things he likes about Katie and it is too exhaustive to mention here, but needless to say, she seems to be a sweet girl and as interested in Mike as he is in her. Time will tell. Mike has promised to keep us informed.

Daddy was feeling so good on Monday that he and another scouting professional decided to do some building at the scout office (sheet rock, lifting, hammering) and Daddy arrived home several hours later all stoved up and miserable. He has been on muscle relaxants and been to the chiropractor three times, spent most of Friday, Saturday and Sunday lying in bed or sitting in his recliner, and he is still in a lot of pain. It has been very discouraging for him. Yesterday we called our home teachers and Steve Reader and Richard Tominaga came over and administered to him. He told me a while ago when he called that his back is finally starting to loosen up and the pain is subsiding.

[Dad] Sue gave you most of the details on my trials this past week. It has been discouraging to seem so fragile after all the hard exercising I have done virtually every day. I finally feel like I am

going to live and am anxious to get back into the swing of things. I hate being so dependent and especially using so many pain relievers and chemicals. While so indisposed and drugged up it is impossible to think coherently and to do the many things I should be doing. I am leaving this weekend to go to Dallas for a seminar that will last Sunday through Wednesday. I hope that I will be well enough to endure all the sitting while flying and driving.

January 29, 2002

[Mom] Steve and Bonnie called and said that Bonnie will go in early Thursday morning to have the baby. She was dilated to three and the doctor was hesitant to have her go too much longer. The physician is in Brigham City and with the weather so uncertain right now, the trip through the canyon could be tricky, especially if she was in labor. Our prayers are with them.

Stephani called this morning and said that they received about two feet of snow in the last 24 hours and that it was still storming. School was cancelled and her kids were excited to get outside and play in all the snow. We got about a foot here in Idaho, but there wasn't a wind and water resource people continue to say that there is no way we can get enough snow to make up for the last two years of drought, but they underestimate the power of prayer and the faith of the saints in this valley.

Last weekend we made a quick trip to Boise where Daddy attended some Republican committee meetings and SaraKay and I spent most of the day visiting with David and Andrea. David took the kids to play tennis and Andrea and I walked down a block and went to some model homes that were on display. It was fun walking through them and seeing the new innovations the builders are coming up with as well as all the beautiful woodwork and interesting floor plans.

One home was selling for \$375,000 so you can imagine how beautiful it was. Later I was telling Daddy about it and he asked if it made me want to build another house and I had to admit that I never want to take on another big mortgage like we did with this house. It feels good to be at this stage of our life.

Although there was a crisp breeze and a little rain, the weather in Boise was very mild and there was almost no snow compared to what we have here. I found myself envying them their mild climate. Before they know it, spring will be on the way.

Andrea is still trying to adjust to anything colder than Tucson, Tempe, or Dallas so it has not seemed all that "mild" to her. It was so fun to have a day to just visit with them. We left about three for home.

I am enjoying my work at the school although it is still hard to feel like I get done around the house the things I want to do. Daddy and I have been doing some shopping for linoleum and I am even considering replacing my counter tops if the price is right. I have had two men come to see them and prepare bids for me so I am waiting to see just what it will cost. I have also ordered some curtains for the living room. It's always such a stressful thing to redecorate since I'm just not that astute when it comes to selecting things. I really value Daddy's opinion.

Daddy was the only member of the stake presidency in town yesterday and so he was involved in meetings or interviews from 6:30 am until nearly 10 pm last night. I think he is enjoying the interaction with the members of the stake and the chance to be a part of their lives.

[Dad] Sue hit most of the highlights, but let me add some details. Sunday was an interesting day with filling in as the only member of the stake presidency in town. Saturday night, President Van Orden received a call that his daughter in Boise was going into labor and so he and Karen headed over there; President Shipley had already left for California to spend a week of vacation there with Brad and his family. We carried on with the usual compliment of meetings Sunday morning. Then I visited our ward for the welcome home for Dave and Barbara Hansen's son, Andrew. There was a large crowd of supporting family and friends and it was great to see the growth he had experienced in Australia.

I went to about 20 minutes of Sue's class and then went to Brody Tomazin's farewell in Moreland 4th ward. I saw Michelle (True) and a couple of her kids—she is living in Denver now but is pretty inactive, but had a pretty good spirit about her and I think she will come around. It was a challenge being the only one there for signing recommends, but I got an early start and was able to finish by the time of the fireside at 7:00. It is always sweet to have those intimate one-on-one visits with the saints, even for just a few minutes, and have them reaffirm their faith and testimony in the Atonement and the restoration of the Gospel and their sustaining of the Prophet and the other authorities. It is always so reassuring to me

to have those that I know express their support of me in this role.

For our Youth Fireside we had the chapel and the overflow packed with youth and their parents. Glen Rawson, a seminary teacher in Blackfoot, verbally and scripturally laid the foundation for the destruction in America at the time of the Savior. Then with a powerful sound system and the lights out we got a small taste of storms, earthquakes and destruction. Then the contrasting stillness, with the voice of the Lord and sounds of music and a video of Christ with the people—healing them and letting them feel his wounds, really helped us to have a sense of the coming of the Savior. He then bore strong testimony and helped us all to realize more fully the importance of listening to and heeding the prophets. It was really powerful and delivered by the Spirit and I don't think anyone there went away without "feeling" something and resolving to follow our prophets today in preparation for the Second Coming. We also keenly felt the conviction that we would be there when that not far distant time comes.

My final interview for the night was Cass Baldwin—he had been home baby-sitting while his wife came for an interview earlier and I told her to have him come around 9:00. He wanted to know what Steve and Dave were doing and commented how he had looked up to them and always felt like they were so smart and always doing what was right going through school. It has been sweet to interview 3 generations of Baldwin's—a house-call to Hugh and Marie, Van and Sally during the regular interview time, and then Cass and Mindy. A representation in my mind of the fruits of faithfulness from generation to generation—and perhaps a sense of the joy that a heavenly parent might experience with that faithfulness of his children.

We had a smooth and uneventful trip to Boise and back and appreciated having a "half-way house" with such pleasant accommodations. Dave and Andrea are such gracious hosts and it was good to have that time with their sweet family. The Olympic Torch came through Boise that morning and they and SaraKay and Laurel and Angela were downtown Boise at 6:00 a.m. to share in the festivities and the free breakfast. I went to the State Republican Central Committee Meeting where I had the opportunity of shaking hands and visiting with Representative Butch Otter, Governor Dirk Kempthorne, and former Senator Steve Simms. We also heard from Senator Larry Craig

via phone link and he talked to us a little about his conferencing with President Bush at Camp David.

I also had the opportunity to visit with quite a few other Republicans who remembered Dad and wanted me to remember them to him which I did last night on the phone. It is always affirming for me to be able to have these kinds of experiences where you rub shoulders with common people in meetings where you express yourselves and help to set the direction of the party and what it stands for. I appreciate the number of people that I know in those circles who are leaders with integrity and honesty.

Last week was rewarding at work because I finally had a few hours to finish cleaning and painting my office and reorganizing it and getting settled back in. I would like to do the same with a small cubbyhole in Idaho Falls that I operate out of when I am up there. I also spent some time scanning in the Wood Badge syllabus and putting it on a CD so that we can duplicate it that way for the 80 some staff members for our 4 courses this year rather than the cost of that many copies of a 400-page book. I also met with Kim and began to map out changes and a plan for my work for this year. Chet was gone all last week so we visited Becky on Wednesday to help break up her week. It is always a pleasure to help her with the "leftovers" she has and to spend some time there with a couple of our grandkids. We saw the MozartMath packets and I am suitably impressed with what she has put together.

January 15, 2002

[Mom] Daddy is in Dallas for a few days and SaraKay and I are doing some mother-daughter bonding while he is gone. Today we went to DI after school and got some roller blades, a Columbia jacket and Sunday shoes. We felt like we had hit the jackpot. SaraKay is growing so fast that she has outgrown the new shoes I bought just a couple months ago so we were pleased to pick up a cute pair that will hopefully do for a few more months. Same with the roller blades. We miss Daddy but it's been fun to have pizza, bum around in town, and work on a school project together. Daddy is due home very late Wednesday night if the plane arrives on time or he may spend the night at a hotel close to the airport and drive home Thursday morning.

Some of you have already heard that Paul got accepted into Cornell. They offered him full tuition and \$19,000 a year for a five-year doctorate program. He hasn't heard from any other schools

as yet but they are thinking Cornell sounds pretty good. I guess the school will fly him out before he makes his choice. Cornell is located in upstate New York about an hour from Palmyra. This is an exciting time for them and we were pleased to hear of this wonderful offer.

Mike called last night with the exciting news that Katie will be visiting him in February during the Olympics. Her mom had some frequent flyer miles and offered them. Shauntel has agreed to be a bed and breakfast for the weekend so that will make it very convenient and comfortable. I think both Mike and Katie feel like they need some time together to get better acquainted and see if they're still interested. Long distance relationships are hard!

Mike said his course work this semester, is extremely difficult. He had his first patient last week. I gathered from the jokes on Chat that it took Mike a half hour to floss the guy's teeth! I need to get more on that experience.

Steve spent the better part of the last two weeks in Florida logging 100-hour weeks trying to please his clients. His situation is still pretty unsettled but he and Bonnie are doing the best they can to move ahead and face whatever happens. The company that is considering buying out their area of Cayenta is getting acquainted with the employees. Steve said they seem astute but certainly not as warm and friendly as the former owners. It's hard to know just how it will all shake out.

Tomorrow night I am invited to attend New Beginnings with SaraKay! Can it be? I can't believe that in six short months she will be entering Young Women! The new Beehives for 2002 have been invited and they are singing a special number as well as participating in the program with the other YW.

Daddy is getting discouraged about his back. He had been to the chiropractor three times, been on medication, and had a blessing. But it wasn't until last Wednesday that he finally began to get some relief. He was worried that it would hamper his trip but when he called tonight, he said that he had gotten along great on the flight and that he had even been able to attend his sessions without the use of his back brace.

My job is going fine. I am impressed with the sweetness I see in the children but it is sad to see how difficult a time some of them have and to know that many of them are living in situations

where their needs are not being met. I thoroughly enjoy the women I work with and feel like they are good to the children.

I told Daddy last week about one little boy who I was matched up with when we learned the waltz in PE class. He had good rhythm and soon we were teaching other couples the steps. When the class was over, he had me lean down and he whispered in my ear, "We make a great team!" Since then he holds my hand any time we are walking in the same direction and he even wanted to dance with me during lunch recess when I was on playground duty.

This past Saturday our stake scheduled a chapel/temple session for the members of the three wards who are having ward conference this next Sunday. We decided to go to the 1:00 session and then catch the 3:15 chapel session with the other ward members. The temple was so crowded that the sessions were taking between 3 and 4 hours to complete so they offered to let us do a sealing session so that we would be able to be finished for the chapel session. It was such a crazy day with that kind of a crowd but it was inspiring to see the temple filled to capacity.

Daddy and I will be speaking Sunday night at a youth fireside in conjunction with conference and we have been asked to cover the information in the new "For the Strength of Youth". When Daddy left for Texas he packed information to study because he also needs to speak that morning in a ward sacrament meeting as well as the youth fireside. Hopefully he will have some study time.

Dear Daddy, (Mom's letter to her Dad)

Not a day goes by that I don't think of you and the new challenge you are facing as a resident of a rest home. It doesn't seem possible that this is your stage of life. You have always been so vibrant and full of life and such a gifted athlete that it is hard to see you losing your ability to move about and care for your own needs. Mother says that the new medication is helping you to walk better and that you exercise daily to maintain your mobility. That doesn't surprise me. You have always valued a strong body and been so active.

I was grateful for our phone visit last Friday. Just hearing your voice and having you describe to me the activities of your day helped me to understand what you are doing and feel a little better about things. I'm sure as the nurses become acquainted with you, they will come to appreciate you and

value your friendship. I know that your church meetings and classes will be enriched because of your contributions. Your leadership abilities are obvious to all who make your acquaintance and you have been a valuable member of every church unit you have been a part of.

I have been thinking lately of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. He certainly was placed in some difficult circumstances at various times in his life and yet each time he stayed true to his faith and because of his integrity he was able to succeed in whatever position he was placed. Just think of all the many challenges you have faced over the years, from being born during the Great Depression and living without many of the comforts of life, to putting yourself through college in a day and age when many people never dreamed of a college education. I can't help but think that the example set by you to value education has trickled down to your posterity and each one of your grandchildren has attended college and received advanced schooling.

I think of the challenges you faced in your work for the U and I Sugar Company and of your stay in Pakistan and the many hardships and frightful experiences you endured there. Your two missions taxed you in new and difficult ways and you rose to those challenges with your traditional strength and devotion. You, with mother at your side, have faced many Goliaths and now another one is on the horizon. I've worried about you as have all of us but after visiting with you the other day on the phone, I was reassured that although you are getting older and not able to be as active physically, that the man who has met many a challenge is still going strong and will meet this newest challenge with success.

I was touched by the knowledge that you and Mom still have your scripture time together and that you are still having family prayer. What an example to all of us. I guess there is never a time in life when we don't need the Lord's help and blessing and praying together for those blessings brings comfort and strength in all surroundings.

I love you and pray each day for your happiness. You have always been my hero and continue to be as I watch you handle this newest transition. You mentioned that Mother needs us now more than ever. I will try to be there for her. She is a precious treasure to me and has been my salvation more than once as I have wrestled with the job of raising this family of mine. I can hardly bear the thought that the time is soon coming

when both of you will leave me and I will no longer be able to turn to you for counsel and love. Know you are loved. Your daughter, Susan

January 22, 2002

[Mom] It's been a blustery, snowy day today, the kind that makes you want to curl up with a good book and not go anywhere. Today was an inservice day so there was no school for either SaraKay or me. We spent the morning cleaning out the storage room, rearranging some furniture, and baking cookies. She went out this afternoon with some friends and they are enjoying the snow. Tomorrow we'll both have to get back to our normal routine but it has been fun to have a "snow day" and enjoy being home. My job is working out well. I enjoy working with the children and I'm gradually learning my duties. I feel appreciated and the women I work with are very pleasant. I really couldn't ask for a better situation.

Daddy and I had a busy weekend with preparations for Sunday. He spent hours studying and writing up two talks that he gave yesterday in conjunction with ward conference. We shared the speaking assignment last night at a youth fireside and that was fun. His stake presidency duties are pretty involved but I think he is enjoying the chance to associate with so many wonderful saints and I know they enjoy him. He is still not entirely better from his back problems but at least it is bearable.

I thought I might include a quick note about each family today.

Let me start with Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. Alva Lu is going with her daughter, Trina, to California in February for Megan's reconstructive surgery on her mouth. Several years ago Megan had leukemia and an infection destroyed the roof of her mouth during the time that she was fighting the cancer. While Alva Lu is gone, Grandpa is going to be in Idaho Falls and the family will be spending the nights with him and checking in on him during the day. We are looking forward to having them closer for a couple of weeks although I know they aren't looking forward to being back in the Idaho winter weather.

This morning I called Grandma Richards and we visited for a long time about Grandpa and his situation. Grandma feels like Grandpa is getting the strength back in his legs and she is wondering if he could function if she brought him home from the rest home for a while. There are a lot of things

to consider and she asked if I could request a family fast the first Sunday in February and pray that they would be able to know what to do. If each of you could remember them in your prayers it would be appreciated.

Steph and Linds are in the throes of job hunting. Linds should complete his doctorate by late spring and he is interviewing for positions in the intermountain area. The people who they are renting from will be returning in July so they are on a schedule as far as when they will need to move. They have so enjoyed Providence but the opportunities aren't there at Utah State right now and so they are looking elsewhere.

Randy is in the process of applying for a fellowship in nuclear radiology. It is a fairly new branch of radiology that deals with injecting radioactive isotopes into the body and then filming them as they exit. It is an area that Randy is very interested in, the drawback being that it is only offered in a very select group of schools and so he would need to be affiliated after completion of the fellowship with a major metropolitan area such as Seattle, Denver, Albuquerque, or Salt Lake. His decision to do the fellowship is still pending but he is moving ahead and seeing if it comes through. If it does there is a chance they would be moving to St. Louis for the rest of his training.

Jonie called and said that she has started working at Alex's school as an aide. She only wanted to work part time but they wanted her full time so she is trying it out. She is right there with Alex all day and so it has been a nice arrangement for her. She has received calls from several of you over the past few weeks and appreciates everyone's efforts to keep in touch.

Steve and Bonnie are within a few weeks of Bonnie's due date and anxious to get the baby here and life settled down. She has had the other babies early so there is a chance that she might deliver next week but the official due date is February 9th. Steve's work has picked up and that is reassuring. These next few weeks he is doing most of his work from his home office and is planning on taking a week's vacation when the baby arrives.

Daddy has some Republican meetings in Boise this weekend and I'm going to call David and Andrea and see if we could spend Friday night with them and then come home Saturday afternoon after Dad's meetings. It doesn't seem possible that it was just a little over a year ago that Chantelle was born and that Andrea went

through all the health problems with her tailbone. I'm sure that they are so grateful that they never have to relive those difficult months!

Becky is doing well with her pregnancy and is elated that she finally has her internet business launched. She sent out e-mails to all of you advertising her web site and hopefully you've had a chance to see it. It has certainly been a monumental accomplishment and she is grateful to have it up and running. Chet is in the process of applying at various schools for an executive MBA program for fall of this year. He is determined to get that moving ahead despite the many demands that are on him at work. His promotion at Melaleuca is such a vote of confidence in his abilities!

John and Laurel sent out a family letter last week that chronicled their upsetting week. James got his hand caught in the screen door and before the day was over he had made a trip to the emergency room, had several stitches, torn some of them out, and then to top it off he got an ear/throat infection and has been on medication for that. His hand injury has hurt so badly that he won't open his fist, even to be cleaned, and John said it's been a battle to take care of him. John and Laurel were on chat last night but both of them signed off early to go to bed and rest while James was sleeping. It's been one of those weeks when the nights were a marathon!

Mike is enjoying this semester and the opportunity to work on a real cadaver. He said that he is in a group that has the top two students in the freshman class in it, but they all defer to him when it comes to working on the cadaver. Update on his love life: Katie has plane tickets for February 8th and will be spending a few days with him in Iowa. He wants to take her to Nauvoo and see the sites there as well as to introduce her to his classmates and friends in the Branch on Sunday. They are e-mailing and keeping the romance going as best they can.

Paul and Jenny received an invitation to visit Cornell and will be flying to New York on February 14th. The school knows their situation and is recruiting them both. We're excited for them. Last week Jenny's Grandmother Cutler passed away. She was such a wonderful friend and example to the whole family and will be greatly missed. Paul mentioned that President Bateman spoke at the funeral. Sister Cutler and her husband were friends with the Bateman's years ago in England

and she has kept up that relationship over the years.

Hopefully each of you got the letters we received from Tim. He seems to be thriving and enjoying the work. I received his deferred acceptance into BYU-Idaho and information so that I can get him registered for fall. We sure miss him!

Sara Kay took third place in the district hoop shoot and won't be advancing this year to Boise. She was happy to get another trophy and have it over for another year. Her most recent project was building a model of an Egyptian house complete with bed, chairs, and earthen pots. We worked together on it and enjoyed it. She was invited last week to attend New Beginnings and so I went with her, denying all the way that she was almost old enough to be a part of that scene.

[Dad] Sue didn't mention that one of the things we did last Saturday was shop for floor coverings for the kitchen. We have been saving toward being able to replace the linoleum because it is breaking up at the seams.

Sunday was a full day but a rewarding one as I felt that the Lord blessed me in the talks I had to give. It is always nice to have Sue as a speaking companion because she does such an outstanding job. The Moreland 5th Ward is such a strong ward and so many of the people there are friends of ours from when we were in that ward, so it was rewarding to be able to visit there for ward conference.

The Finance Conference I went to in Dallas was excellent. I came back with a lot of good ideas and renewed excitement for my job. The time and hassle of flying sure made me glad I don't have to do that much. I was able to stay Saturday night in a Comfort Inn just past the airport in Salt Lake where I was able to leave the car and take a shuttle to the airport. Security wasn't too bad on Sunday morning and I wasn't ever picked for the spot check and complete shakedown while in the boarding area. I got good leg room in the exit row of the Airbus going to Denver and on to Dallas/Fort Worth. Coming back from Texas the security at check-in was much more stringent and I was "wanded" and my shoes scanned and frisked. The weather was great in Texas. It was good to get back home though. I miss my family and routine here.

February 04, 2002

[Mom] The big news of the week is that Steve and Bonnie have a new baby girl, born Tuesday,

January 29th (Great-grandma Ilene's 80th birthday), at about 6:30 pm in Brigham City. Bonnie was scheduled to have labor induced on Thursday but she started on her own on Tuesday morning and since Steve was in Salt Lake at meetings that day, she called their home teacher and he and his wife took her to the hospital. Stephani helped with the children and Steve left his meetings and joined her in Brigham City. Anne Marie was 8 lb. 4oz. and Bonnie was grateful that she didn't go full term or she might have had a 10 lb. baby! Mother and baby are both doing well. Steve took the week off to help out at home and the ward has been good to help with the meals.

Daddy, SaraKay and I spent Saturday with them, doing a little cleaning and laundry and entertaining the kids. Anne Marie ate and slept and hardly made a peep the whole time we were there! She is such a pretty baby! It is always a relief to get the delivery over and get everyone adjusted to the newcomer. It was nice to be able to help out. Shannon and Doug arrived that afternoon and her folks will be there Wednesday and then SaraKay and I will be going to stay with them for Thursday-Saturday. Bonnie hasn't had the back problems she had with Jared and that has been such a relief.

Several of you have asked regarding Steve's employment. The meeting he attended on Tuesday morning was the 7th round of layoffs and reduced the Cayenta staff to less than 25. He fully expected to join the ranks of the unemployed, but when the cuts were announced, he had again survived. (He is the ultimate Survivor!) The new company that has acquired Steve's branch of Cayenta has their own employees, bringing the combined number to 40+. Just exactly how this is all going to work out when the merge is complete is anyone's guess and so Steve is taking it a day at a time. He assumes that since many of the other company's employees work from their homes, that he may still be able to continue with his present set-up. Needless to say, he continues to keep his eyes open for other opportunities just in case.

Last night on chat John and Laurel announced that come September they will be adding a new member to their family. Laurel has been struggling with morning sickness and so they let Emma in on the secret so she would understand why Mom was spending time on the couch. A few days later Emma announced to the children and mothers at her preschool, "My mom is sick because she has a baby on the way!" So much for secrets. Anyway,

they gave me permission to let the family know. Although it may alter their plans for a summer trip to Idaho, they are excited and pleased.

Randy received word that he has qualified for an interview at St. Louis for their fellowship program. This is the school that was his first choice and so he was pleased to receive the phone call inviting him to come on Tuesday for a visit and a day of interviews. Shauntel and Camille are going along, too, and will take in some sites. Shauntel has mixed emotions about leaving Iowa. She knows that they would probably not have as nice a house in St. Louis as they have enjoyed in Coralville, but she feels like she is ready for a change of scenery after being there for the last 9 years!

Many of you have asked about the Mike/Katie connection. She will be flying into Cedar Rapids this Thursday and staying with Randy and Shauntel between dates with Mike. He plans to take her to tour Nauvoo on Saturday and to be a part of his branch's activities on Sunday, show her around the dental school, hang out with Shauntel and Randy, watch some Olympics, and get better acquainted. I know we are all anxious to know how it goes so I thought that maybe we should set up a schedule for calling Shauntel. Such as: Thursday noon, Steph; Thursday night, Bonnie, Friday noon, Andrea; Friday night, Mom; Saturday morning, Jenny; Saturday night, Mom. Seriously though, we do hope that Shauntel keeps us posted as to how things are going. I'm trying to stay calm although she appears to be the most promising prospect in a long time. Of course, I realize that "chemistry" has to be figured into the equation, so whether it works or not, Mike, have fun! (And keep in mind: "I'm certainly not against an occasional good night kiss!")

Paul and Jenny have been invited to interview in Madison, Wisconsin and also Illinois. They are flying to New York on Feb. 14th (just a year ago they were in Minneapolis for interviews when Paul proposed marriage) and they will be visiting Madison on February 28th and Illinois in March. This is certainly an exciting time for them. They aren't making any decision until they see the school, get a feel for the program, and evaluate the total package. If they go to New York, Jenny has three married cousins who would be there and if they went to the Midwest, they would have some Larsen family around. I guess it is a win/win situation.

I called Grandma Ilene this morning and visited with her for a while before I left for work. She had

requested a family fast yesterday for her and Grandpa. She knows that he gets discouraged with his situation and wonders if she should be trying to find a way to care for him at home. There are many considerations and she and Kathy have talked through the options again and again.

Last week Grandpa had an incident in which he was holding some hot cocoa and all at once he either fell asleep or blacked out and spilled it into his lap, burning himself a little. He has done this type of thing before. There doesn't seem to be any particular reason for it but it is certainly upsetting. Although there are times when he seems to gain his strength in his legs, at other times he is quite weak and depends on his wheelchair. Grandma's health isn't very good right now. She is looking at having minor surgery and I am planning to spend a week with her following the surgery to help with her recovery. She was going to call the doctor today to see what her schedule was like for the next few months and we will move ahead when that is determined. We appreciated those of you who were able to fast with us yesterday and I know Grandma appreciates your prayers. (I just heard back from Grandma. The surgery is scheduled for March 25th. I will arrive the night before and stay until the following Friday.)

Grandma Larsen will be in Idaho for Jalene and Kendall's son's welcome home this Sunday. On Wednesday she will fly with Trina and Megan to California for a week during which time Megan will have surgery. It is unfortunate that they will have to battle the Olympic crowds in Salt Lake but it has been a challenge to get the surgery scheduled and taken care of.

Originally, we were going to help Grandpa during the week that she was gone, but since Staff is spending so much time in St. George with his business, it was decided that between Jeanie and Staff, Grandpa would be better off in St. George during that time. Karen is going to drive down for a few days, too. I think this will work much better for Alva Lu and Grandpa since a couple days after Alva Lu returns, they are headed to Show Low for Jeremy's welcome home.

[Dad] Let me share with you a few reflections about exercise: **I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me. *My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. Now she's 97, but we don't know where she is. *It is well documented that for every minute you exercise, you add one minute to your life. This enables you, at 85 years old, to*

spend an additional five months in a nursing home at \$5,000 per month.

We enjoyed our trip to Logan on Saturday and the brief stay with Steve and Bonnie. We didn't do much, but I know even a little takes the edge off it when you might be close to being overwhelmed with all the laundry, cleaning, feeding, diapers, keeping peace with the natives, and so on.

As we did some calendaring for the next few weeks, I realized how much our lives are full of a myriad of activities and events relating to family, Church, work, and politics. I had to take a nap to recover. *"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."* (Hannah More) *"Time invested in improving ourselves cuts down on time wasted in disapproving of others."*(anonymous) *"Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another."* (George Eliot) *"Being considerate of others will take your children further in life than any college degree."* (Marian Wright Edelman

February 12, 2002

[Mom] Daddy has been in Boise since last night so SaraKay and I are having another bonding experience. We also have Hillary Ellis with us since her parents are on a trip. She will be going to another friend's house later this evening and will spend a few days there with her. We've had a quiet day and feel like things are pretty much back to normal after our busy weekend in Logan.

We left for Logan on Thursday and had a trouble-free trip. We got to Steve and Bonnie's at about supper time and spent the next two days helping out with the new baby. Anne is certainly contented. She just eats and sleeps and doesn't seem at all ruffled by the bustle of their busy household. When we sat down for supper, it hit me what a large family they have now! It's hard to believe that come fall they will have the oldest three in school!

Bonnie is getting her strength and stamina back and is grateful that her back has not been as bad as it was following Jared's birth. Her father was going to stay with them for a few days this week and help out so they are feeling like they are going to make it. The first few days and weeks after a new baby are pretty crazy and it takes a while for the whole household to adjust to the new arrival and the changes that invariably come. Several of you have asked regarding the date of Anne's blessing. The doctor has advised them to wait a couple months before taking her out in public

since there have been several incidences of RSV, a respiratory disease that can be very dangerous to infants. We'll let you know when the blessing will be as soon as a date is set.

On Friday afternoon Stephani brought the kids, visited for a few minutes, and then took Sara Kay with them until Saturday. They had planned a pizza party for the Opening Ceremonies and it was fun for SaraKay to spend the time with the kids. I watched the ceremony with Steve and Bonnie, Rachel, and Nathan. They had been learning about the Olympics in school and so it was fun to hear their questions and impressions as we watched the program. I had been so excited to see what the organizing committee would come up with and I thought the program was truly spectacular! I have heard many positive comments about it and a few negative ones; you can never please everyone.

I loved the history of the Indians, settlers, pioneers, and the Golden Spike Railroad which were incorporated into the Ceremony. It was fun to watch the spectators and see how cleverly they were included with the lights and cards! The Tabernacle Choir was so awesome, as usual, and the orchestra, amazing. I sat spellbound for the entire program and enjoyed sharing the experience with Steve and Bonnie. Daddy was home alone that night but he said that he settled in and thoroughly enjoyed it from start to finish. I think we were all hoping (and praying) that it would be successful. I have gotten in a couple hours of watching since Friday night and continue to thrill with the games, the crowds and all the festivities. I think Utah can be proud of the job they've done.

[Dad] My seminar in Boise was very good and I felt like it was well worth the time and expense to go to it. I enjoyed the Larsen half-way house in Boise. When I came out of the bathroom at 6:15 am there was Joseph, just waiting to pounce on Grandpa. We had a sweet quick visit and morning devotional before I left for Nampa.

Sunday was another busy day with meetings, interviews, and so on. Saturday was a Trainer conference for all training staffs in the council and then in the afternoon we divided into our individual Wood Badge staffs and I enjoyed getting acquainted with the staff I will be involved with under the direction of Ed Axford from Pocatello.

Last Friday I went to Bishop's Day at Seminary and thoroughly enjoyed it. It has been over 20 years

since I have been to one of those experiences and it was inspiring to rub shoulders with the good Bishops from these two stakes. It was especially interesting to have one of the Bishops be Steve Bair, who was one of my Priests when I was Bishop of the Moreland 2nd Ward. It was lonely to have Sue and SaraKay gone from Thursday afternoon on.

February 19, 2002

[Mom] Well, the Olympics are almost over for another four years. We have thoroughly enjoyed the events that we have watched and have thrilled at the crowds and reception that the athletes have received in Salt Lake. I'm sure it is amazing to actually attend the events in person and enjoy the beautiful facilities. We have appreciated Andrea's mother, Laurel, and her detailed accounts of her volunteer work at Park City. I'm sure she will look back on these two weeks with good memories, although she has put in some grueling days in bitterly cold weather.

Becky and Chet attended events on Saturday at Park City and were so pleased to see Laurel right off when they arrived. She gave them some tips on the best places to stand to get the best view and they really appreciated that. Hopefully all of you have had some time to watch a few of the events and have enjoyed them as much as we have. The other night there was a segment about "Light of the World" and the announcer said that a video of it would be made available in the future. It looks truly spectacular! Isn't it wonderful to belong to a church that does everything with such excellence!

Bonnie called and asked me to let you know that Anne Marie will be blessed on April 14th, the Sunday after General Conference. Their meetings are at 11:00 a.m. and they are hosting a dinner at 12:30 for those who can attend. They seem to be doing great and managing well. Steve went through another layoff last Friday and his boss informed the new owners that he refused to cut anyone else and that if they couldn't leave the staff as presently constituted that he wanted them to lay them all off and be done with it. It has been such a tough situation. Steve is determined to ride it out since if he quits, he will lose some of the benefits that would be available to him if he gets laid off. Our prayers continue with them.

Mike called last week and asked why I hadn't said anything about Katie (Williams) in last week's family letter. I had to admit that I hadn't received any news to put in. Every time I tried to call

Shauntel and get the info, Mike and Katie were there and it wasn't a good time to talk. I knew that Mike had some important tests on Thursday and Friday and when he didn't call after Katie left on Tuesday morning, I assumed that things hadn't worked out. Well, I guess it was quite the contrary! They had a wonderful time and yes! he did kiss her! Wow! That's the biggest news in a long time.

Now Mike is trying to finagle a way to get to Salt Lake over spring break and spend some time with her and her family. His friend had invited him to make the trip with him but then cancelled out so Mike is checking on flights and other prospects. He is excited and feels like this relationship has "potential". We're excited for him and hope that things will work out for him to get to Utah over spring break. He sent us a cute picture during Family Chat on Sunday! She looks like a wonderful girl!

Paul called last night to give us an update on Cornell. They flew to New York on Valentine's Day and returned Sunday night. While they were there, they had ample time to visit with several professors, tour the campus, and get a feel for the situation. An added bonus was the opportunity to spend some time with Jenny's uncles' family who live in the area and to tour some Church history sites. They said that the campus was very nice; the area was beautiful with rolling wooded hills. Their only hesitation was that they weren't totally sold on the project that they would be working on. They are withholding judgement until they see what the other schools have to offer. They are spending part of this week in St. George with Jenny's family and are hoping to be able to drop in and visit Grandpa and Grandma Larsen while they are there.

Daddy, SaraKay, and I spent part of yesterday shopping for some furniture. We have been looking for a couch that would fit in the dining room and take some of the use and pressure off of our living room set. I knew it had to be a relatively small couch to fit the space and most of the couches these days are big and bulky with lots of pillows. Yesterday I finally found what I wanted and we bought it as well as an entertainment center for the downstairs. We are so excited to be making these improvements. I have contracted to have my counter tops replaced and although it is not going to happen for a few more weeks, I have been so excited to make that change.

We received word that Tim's release date is August 14th. We are assuming that his

homecoming will be the following Sunday, August 18th. Daddy and I feel that if we are going to have a reunion, it probably will be that weekend and into the next week. One unknown is Mike and Katie. Shauntel and Camille were going to come home for a month in August since Randy will be in D.C. for six weeks of training that month and Mike was planning on coming home for part of July and August after his classwork is over the middle of June.

With Laurel's baby due on September 15th, she assumes that she will not have permission to fly but she suggested that John and Emma could attend and represent their family. Steph and Linds are up in the air regarding their plans but they will probably be close enough that it will work for them. Would the rest of you let us know how something the middle of August would work for you?

I will be going for a week the end of March to stay with Grandma Ilene following her surgery on the morning of March 25th. That is my spring break at the Charter school and Daddy is going to hold down things here with SaraKay while I go. Grandma isn't looking forward to another surgery, but hopefully she will be able to bounce back and feel better soon. Grandpa Richards' roommate, Ned, passed away last week and Kathy is going to be taking Mom and Dad to the funeral tomorrow. Ned has been a good friend and roommate for Grandpa. Hopefully he will get another one who can be as good. Grandpa needs someone who can help be his "eyes" since he is slowly losing his sight and occasionally needs a helping hand. Remember them in your prayers.

[Dad] The most exciting news is the shopping spree we went on. I think that is a first for us-to spend most of a holiday shopping for some long-needed items. The day before was ward conference in the Moreland 4th Ward. It is another great ward with great depth in leadership and a high level of activity. I felt like my talk in Sacrament Meeting went well and I had a little more time for it. Sue and I spoke at a fireside for the youth that evening in the Jeff Secrist home.

As Sue mentioned, we have thoroughly enjoyed the Olympics and have tried to watch as much as we could. We were relieved to have the pairs ice skating resolved with a second gold given to Canada and were touched with the sportsmanship evidenced between them at the awards ceremony. There are so many poignant experiences and personal dramas highlighted by the Olympics.

We received another couple of letters from Tim today and a copy of the letter from his mission president calling him to be a zone leader. On our copy the President wrote, "Thanks for your son. He is none less than magnificent!" Sure a sweet complimentary letter that causes parents to bust their buttons.

With my work I am doing some planning, backdating, some meetings with individuals, and trying to fill a schedule on March 7 for when Perry Cochell comes to work for a day in the council. One of my best friends on the staff, Robert Fawcett, headed to Maui the first of March to be the new Scout Executive for that council. I will miss him but am grateful for this career opportunity for him.

February 26, 2002

[Mom] Last night during the Closing Ceremonies, when the Olympics were pronounced officially over, there was an audible, sad, "Oh" from the stadium crowd. It was so loud that even the President of the OAC responded with a warm smile in the middle of his remarks. A part of that "Oh" could be heard from us here at 80 N 740 W, Blackfoot. We have spent several evenings watching the competitions and have thrilled with the proceedings. Athletes we didn't know existed two weeks ago have become familiar to us and we have enjoyed the personal glimpses into their lives and families provided by the media. Although we didn't enjoy the Closing Ceremonies nearly as much as the Opening, we have felt like the Games were a wonderful success, thanks to the work of so many and the Lord's loving kindness in providing ideal weather and a safe environment. We are so proud of how it all went and feel that Utah really can be proud!

February has flown by and we have had a few warm days that have cleared off a lot of the snow and given us hope of coming spring. I am forever amazed at the pace of life and how quickly the months pass. I mentioned to Daddy yesterday that it was Chantelle's first birthday this Saturday and he looked at me in disbelief! It doesn't seem possible to me either but the calendar doesn't lie.

I know that part of the reason the days are flying by for me is because my days have been shortened by my part-time job. It has worked out well, so far, but I'm sure that once I feel the need to be in the yard and garden, it will be harder for me to give up my mornings. But, if past winters are any indication, the snow and mud really don't

clear away until April so I won't have to worry for a while.

Daddy and I attended a Republican Lincoln Day banquet the other night and enjoyed sharing dinner with some old friends. It's an election year and there was a lot of campaigning going on, including an old BYU friend of Daddy's who is hoping to get our help in Bingham County in his run for Lt. Governor. Daddy is very hesitant to take on another assignment right now with his demands at work and his church responsibilities. There is never a shortage of worthy causes and it's a trick finding the right combination that enables us to give service and yet not get overwhelmed.

We received word that Tim will be home on August 14th and we are assuming his homecoming will be that next Sunday on the 18th. If that is the case, we would like to schedule our family reunion the 19th through the 21st. For now the plan is to rent one of the condos that the Allan Larsen family used last summer for their reunion. We will use the Island park Scout Camp for festivities and divide up the bedrooms at the condo and the cabins at camp so that each family has a base of operations. We will have boating, kayaking, swimming, biking, and even some river runs like the group did last year. The condo is only about 15 minutes from camp and we think that utilizing the two facilities will give each family a situation that they and their little ones can live with. This is our plan for now so would each of you please see if you can work things out to come. More on that later.

[Dad] We have watched more TV over the last two weeks as we tried to keep up with the Olympics than we have in the last two years. It was almost a relief to have it come to an end. As Sue mentioned, we have been enthralled with the events and personal dramas of each individual participating in the Olympics. Sunday I was able to attend Brandon Stoke's welcome home. He gave an incredible talk and I was again impressed with the personal growth that missionaries experience during that two years stint. I found out last Friday that Jacob (Rick's son) had received his mission call. He is going to England, Manchester and will go directly to the MTC in Preston, England. I am so excited for him-I loved England and know it will be a wonderful experience for him.

When I was working in Hereford, we had a District conference in Worcester and the President of the London Temple came to our conference. When he

met some of the members we had brought from Hereford he was amazed. He said he had worked there as a missionary and had had such a poor reception that he was convinced that Hereford would be one of the last places in the British Isle to embrace the Gospel.

Saturday was a "stay at home and do little chores around the house" kind of day. It is satisfying for us to be making some changes, hanging some pictures, and making improvements that Sue and I have wanted to make for a long time. I have taken old diplomas out of frames and replaced them with Greg Olson prints.

We were babysitting Tate and Maddie while their parents went to SLC to the "Light of the World" production. They were so fun and good for us. Of course, it always helps to have SaraKay around to help entertain and keep them occupied.

Today at work I continued with my framing as I matted and framed eight James E. West certificates in preparation for the Annual Business Meeting this Thursday. Also, on Wednesday we are having a reception for Robert Fawcett prior to his departure this weekend for Maui to be the Scout Executive. My boss asked me to be the interim office manager for Pocatello until he gets the manpower sorted out and knows which way he is going.

There were so many things that Robert took care of that he is really going to leave a hole in our operation.

One night last week I received a call from Elder Olivas (who is from Monterrey, Mexico) to help him with a baptismal interview. Because I had said a few words to him in Spanish he thought I could speak well enough for the interview. I ended up utilizing an interpreter to help me. I could really identify with what Tim said in a recent letter about the difficulty of baptismal interviews and wanting to be able to help and build but struggling to know what the Spirit would have you say. Jose wasn't quite ready and I encouraged him to continue attending Church, reading in the Book of Mormon, and praying to help him prepare. It was interesting to find out that he was from El Salvador. He is very poor and has had a lot of frustrations with getting work enough to provide for his needs. I was reminded of how grateful I should be of the many blessings we have—home, food, clothing, cars, health, etc.

Sunday night before the closing ceremonies, I had the opportunity of signing recommends again. I

always enjoy that opportunity to visit one-on-one with the saints and allow them the chance to affirm their testimonies and commitment to the gospel.

It is always interesting to ask the last question: "Do you consider yourself worthy to enter the Lord's house and participate in temple ordinances?" So many people, after answering all the other questions correctly, hesitate on that question. I remind them that all the previous questions set a threshold that they qualified for and that the Atonement lifts them from there and they should never hesitate to answer that question in the affirmative if they are living the gospel and doing all they can. In a way, I feel that hesitancy indicates lack of faith in the Atonement. Love you. Dad

March 5, 2002

[Mom] We've had a wonderful Sabbath. I thought that I would relate an experience that Ryan Jenks told as he bore his testimony today. He is soon to be leaving for the Mexico City Mission although he has been 19 since last fall. He is a long-distance runner and has attended BYU Idaho on an athletic scholarship the last two years, placing both years in the Jr. College National Competition.

When the decision was made to delay his mission, his parents supported him in the choice, knowing that when he returned intercollegiate athletics would have been eliminated from the curriculum and that if he ran for them fall semester that he would get his scholarship to pay for another semester, at least. Well, to make a long story short, as he approached winter semester, he was having second thoughts about leaving and he said that he had such a desire to "run" in the track events with spring approaching that he was tempted to delay until summer.

One day as he was playing basketball with his running teammates, he had an accident and broke his nose. He said that the first thing he had come to his mind after the accident was his responsibility to serve a mission and he committed right then and there to get into the field. He said that when he received the blow to his face, (and the jolt to his conscience) he thought, "Whatever happened to that still, small voice!" It was a sweet story of his conversion and the motivation to do what he should.

I need to close. Daddy and I are heading to Idaho Falls for an anniversary celebration! We can't believe it has been 36 years! We are so grateful

for our decision to marry and for the Lord's many mercies and blessings to us over the years, especially in the wonderful family we've had. Love, Mom

[Dad] Can you believe it--36 years of marital bliss--I am impressed that your mother has that much endurance! We dropped SaraKay off at Becky's. Chet was going to be working late and because of a teacher strike on Tuesday there would be no school, so SaraKay was having a sleep over with the Seely clan. We went out to eat at Sizzler's and had a great meal of steak and shrimp and then we went to the movie, "Count of Monte Cristo." Many of you kids had recommended it and we found it to be a delightful show with enough action to keep my attention and enough romance to keep Sue interested.

The changing of our counter tops in the kitchen began today. The old tops are mostly removed and we are living with all the drawers and everything out of the kitchen and stuffed in the end of the dining room and a plastic sheet suspended from the ceiling to separate the two rooms and keep the construction dust from covering everything in the dining room. I will save a piece of the orange Formica as a souvenir memento for any of you kids that want one. We will get most of the new counter tops on Tuesday and hope to be finished with new Formica and tile backsplash on Wednesday and be able to move back into the kitchen.

Sunday was a normal fast day with Stake Presidency meetings at 7:00 and most of the rest of the day spent with the family and attending our meetings and a special choir practice. A friend and neighboring stake president, Joe Dahle, was the focus of our fast. He was recently diagnosed with a type of Alzheimer's and was given about three years to live. He is about our age and it is really sad to see this happening to him. He has been a tremendous influence as a teacher in Blackfoot and as a lecturer throughout the state on drug awareness and programs to help the youth.

Saturday, I spent all day in Pocatello at a Wood Badge Staff Development meeting. It is interesting to watch the differences in management styles and how personalities come together to accomplish similar goals for different training courses. Life is an ongoing education on interpersonal relations and how to work effectively together to help and lift others.

Thursday night we provided beds for Mark and Rita and Jessica and had a brief visit with them. They had left Denver that morning, went to a couple BYU Idaho games--a women's BB game that Jet was playing in and an intramural game that Jeff played in. They were going to the big celebration recognizing all athletes that had played for Ricks on Friday night.

Last week was also a council board meeting where we recognized six new James E West Fellows. It was a great meeting as we also received commitments for seven additional new pledges.

March 12, 2002

[Mom] As Daddy mentioned in last week's letter, we celebrated our 36th anniversary on Monday. We had a fun evening thanks to Becky helping us out with SaraKay. It's always hard to have activities on Monday since it is supposed to be for families and we are hesitant to interfere with other family's times together.

Something happened on Friday that I would like to relate. Becky called midday to see if we were planning to come to Idaho Falls to look at flooring. She invited us to have supper with her and the kids as a part of our trip. I hadn't had a chance to call any businesses to see if they were open late since I knew that Dad wouldn't be getting home much before five.

In the course of our conversation, I could tell that Becky was about at the end of her rope with Chet gone on a business trip, the kids and her all sick with bronchitis, and the winter blues in general. I invited her to come for the evening but with the kids so sick she couldn't face all the hassle of the trip. We visited for a while and I told her I would get back to her when I checked with the businesses. After making a few calls I found that most of the stores closed at 5:30 and that we wouldn't be able to do much looking in the few minutes we would have. I called her back and told her we would not be coming.

After hanging up the phone, I got to thinking about it and decided that maybe she and the kids needed a break and so I hurriedly called Daddy (again) and ask if he would feel alright about spending our evening in Idaho Falls with Becky. He agreed and I hung up and called Becky back.

A few hours later, Daddy arrived home from work and I hustled him back out the door and into the car. We left but as we drove through Riverside he turned to me and said, "Now where are we going

and what are we doing?" In the midst of all the calls and the demands of his day he had somehow lost track of just what was going on. Although it seemed like a funny question, I realized that here was a man who was willing to respond to my every wish whether for me personally or for one of the family. That's pretty typical for Daddy. He grows dearer to me each year and I thank the Lord daily for his goodness, his sacrifices in our behalf, and for our wonderful marriage and family.

We had a busy week last week. On Wednesday the ward hosted an evening at the Pebble Creek Ski Lodge. Daddy had meetings so SaraKay invited a friend and we made the trip ourselves. Luckily the snow on the road was pretty minimal and the climb up the steep mountain wasn't too scary for me.

When we arrived, we found that three other wards in our stake were also there and so it was a fun night complete with a lot of SaraKay's friends from school. Last year SaraKay had such a difficult experience being on skis for the first time that I really wondered if she would enjoy going again, but she assured me that she would since last year turned out okay thanks to Lucinda Mangum who skied along with her and got her up and going.

She was right. Once she got her skis rented and got on the hill, she was off and skiing like a pro. Well, not quite like a pro (considering the Olympics) but good enough to stay upright and ski from the top of the hill to the bottom without any spills. It was so fun to watch her and see her confidence grow with each trip down the hill.

Her friend Brittany Fife had never skied before and was having much the same experience that SaraKay had last year. She was getting cold and discouraged and I thought maybe the experience would be a negative one for her. Fortunately, Gina Goodwin and Tony Watson noticed our plight and offered help and soon Brittany was up and going. It ended up being a good experience for us all.

SaraKay had a big week with the spelling bee on Friday morning. She and I have been practicing the spelling words for the last few weeks and she was pretty nervous but prepared. I knew that my work would conflict with the Bee and I asked if she minded if I didn't come. She admitted that she would prefer I not be there since my presence created a lot more pressure for her. Anyway, when all was said and done, she brought home a second-place trophy and \$10 for her efforts. She was pleased to do so well and I was grateful that

she was able to see some results from her many hours of preparation. The word she got wrong was "dicotlydon" (is that spelled right?)

One of Tim's best friends, Shane Jenks, returned on Wednesday and it was a thrill to see him again. He will be reporting his mission this Sunday and Ryan will be giving his farewell speech. A big, happy day at the Jenk's! They are such a fine family and exemplary in every way!

I have been thinking lately about my dad. Several weeks ago, his brother, Warren, was put in the rest home with him. They didn't share a room but they both were able to get around well enough to visit each other. During the time that Warren was there, they enjoyed their renewed association and had some good times together visiting and reminiscing. When it became too difficult for Warren to be transported to another location for his weekly dialysis, the decision was made to move him into a facility where his treatments would be more accessible. Although Grandpa was sad to see him leave, he recognized that the move was the best thing.

A couple weeks ago Warren had one leg amputated above the knee as a result of his diabetes. Since that time, he has been in critical condition in an ICU at the hospital. Grandma Ilene and Merle (Warren's wife) have kept in close touch so that Grandpa would know how things were going. One day last week, Warren's daughter, Janice, dropped by the rest home and told Grandpa that she wanted to take him to see his brother. She bundled him up and checked him out and took him to the hospital. The hospital personnel dressed Grandpa up in sterile gear so that he could be wheeled into Warren's room and be with him for a while. This morning Grandma said that the family has made the decision to take Warren off life support and let him go. They suspect that it won't be long before he slips away.

Of course, this is an emotional time for Warren's family but Grandpa and his remaining siblings have spent their share of time wrestling with their own feelings as their youngest brother hovers near death. Of the original nine children, four are gone, five remain. Having never lived through this kind of situation, I can but imagine the range of emotions one would experience.

My thoughts have centered these last few days on a Richards' family experience nearly 50 years ago when Grandpa, Warren, and Jay (another brother) bought a beautiful timbered 1200 acre ranch in the Black Hills of So. Dakota. Grandpa was

working for U&I in the nearby town of Belle Fourche, Warren ran the ranch, and Jay, who lived in Utah, came for an occasional visit to check on his investment. As time passed, it became apparent that the partnership was under strain for various reasons that I won't mention here and because Warren had a growing family and no other means of support (Grandpa and Jay both had other employment) the decision was made to let Warren manage the ranch and eventually buy out Grandpa and Jay. To make a long story short, the arrangement failed and the ranch was eventually lost and their investment lost, too.

As a young child who was in love with ranch life, the adventures it brought, and the glamour of the western atmosphere, I harbored some hard feelings for many years against Warren. One time I expressed these feelings to my parents and they both encouraged me to put them aside. They had chosen to forgive and forget, saving the brotherly relationship even though it meant a financial loss to them. I have never forgotten that lesson because my parents certainly were in need of the money. Still, they chose to put it aside and move on.

Now the years have passed and Warren and Grandpa have occasion to again rub shoulders. I couldn't help wondering what thoughts went through Grandpa's mind as he sat at Warren's bedside. I'm quite sure he was grateful that their relationship 50 years ago stayed sweet and that today they could honestly express love for each other and visit one last time about days gone by and the reunions ahead.

I mention this not in any way to discredit Warren but to share a lesson learned. As your Dad and I have interacted with our siblings, there may have been times when we wondered at their motives or questioned their wisdom in some decision or other. With time, I think we are becoming more loving and tolerant and we relish the time we have together. Our siblings are becoming more precious to us as the years pass and hopefully we can continue to grow closer to them.

I guess this was again reaffirmed to me last night as my brother, Nate, dropped in for a visit enroute to his new building project in Declo. We had a wonderful visit and finally went to bed about 11:30. He left at five this morning to get to his 7 o'clock appointment with his supervisor. Right now his life is so hectic and crazy with all his work demands and the additional pressure of finishing up a home for his own family, but he says that for

the first time in their married life, finances aren't an issue and that is a wonderful relief.

One last item. These past few weeks we have been involved with several long-awaited home improvement projects. Each Christmas for a long time Grandpa and Grandma Larsen have given us some money. When our family was younger and times were hard, we usually used this money to defray the expenses of Christmas. The last few years Daddy has started a Christmas fund and our goal has been to have the money available in that fund when December arrives so we can live within our planned budget for the holiday. It was a red-letter day several years ago when Grandpa gave us our Christmas money and we could honestly say that it hadn't already been spent. It was then that we started using the Christmas gift for projects around the house or furnishings to keep things upgraded and in good condition.

This year when the Christmas check arrived, it was for more than in previous years. We debated about how to use it to best advantage and Daddy agreed with me that some of it should go for home improvement projects such as new living room drapes, new counter tops, and a new kitchen floor. We are in the throes of seeing these projects completed and it has been a sweet experience to actually have the funds to do these projects and not indebt ourselves. We are so grateful to Grandpa and Grandma for their generosity to us and for the improvements that we have been able to make.

I need to close. Daddy went to bed some time ago and I'm ready. Love, Mom

[Dad] This past week has been busy as usual. Sunday meetings are always interesting and enlightening and I enjoy serving with President Shipley and President Van Orden. It was especially sweet to participate in giving President Shipley a priesthood blessing before he went into a particularly challenging interview with a couple from our stake. I certainly can testify that there is no guile or ill intent behind his actions—just an honest desire to do what is best and right and the Lord's will.

Work has been interesting with the added dimension of being responsible for the Pocatello and Blackfoot offices for the time being until other assignments are made. I am grateful to have a good job with a reasonable income and to be able to meet the needs of my family. After making all these improvements in our home I certainly don't

have much desire to move or make any dramatic changes in our situation.

Last Saturday I went to Idaho Falls to help with a training session for scribes for all the Wood Badge courses for this year. It is amazing how much technology has changed the nature and quality of the work we do to conduct training courses. With laptops, digital cameras, CD's, and digital projectors, we are able to duplicate and simplify efforts between courses and deliver so much better quality.

Last Thursday, Ben Hansen, who runs the Blackfoot store, gave me a list of things he had been talking about with Robert for about six months and by Friday I had them all taken care of except for replacing the rope on the flagpole in front of the office. I am going to do that this morning and feel good about being able to expeditiously take care of these maintenance needs with a minimum of hassle and cost. I had better get this posted and get going. Love, DAD

March 19, 2002

[Dad] For Home Evening last night, Mike prepared a lesson that was fully enjoyed by Madison, Tate, Becky, SaraKay, Katie, and Mom and me. After getting untangled from the yarn, we then saw Becky and family off and then the rest of us took a cake to our new friend from El Salvador-Jose. It was rewarding to have that experience of sharing and to have Mike as our spokesman with his excellent Spanish. I think Jose was pleasantly surprised and we had a sweet short visit.

I had the opportunity of interviewing three young people for the vacancy we have at work for a part-time store clerk. It was fun to interact with them and determine their suitability for the position. I have also been fielding a lot of disgruntled feelings because of what is going on in the council with losing Robert and Steve to other councils and the jockeying for position to take their places. Brad Allen dropped in and visited for a while and it was great to visit with him. It reminded me why I was attracted to work for the Scouts.

Last week's trip to Provo and Salt Lake for family reasons was the greatest. We thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful meal Jenny and Paul had prepared for us and Mike and Katie. It was great to be able to meet her and get a feel for her personality and strength and how she might fit with Mike and the family. She is certainly a lovely young lady and we thoroughly enjoyed the time visiting around the

table after dinner and then the time we have spent with them last night.

On Saturday we went to SLC to the Distribution Center for some things I needed for the Scout Shop and then to Kathy and Dick's for a Richards family gathering. We picked up Arch at the rest home and were saddened to see how he is aging and declining in physical and mental acuity.

[Mom] Last week was such a flurry of activities that I've had to check my calendar to remember all the comings and goings. We enjoyed our short stay with Paul and Jenny in Provo. They really put on a feast for us Friday night, complete with homemade rolls and an exotic salad straight from the pages of "Better Homes!" The visit over dinner was equally fine. Mike and Katie joined us and we enjoyed getting to know her. Jenny is finally beginning to look pregnant and they are starting to stockpile things for the anticipated blessed event. Paul's graduation date is April 25/6 and the baby is due the next week. Our plan is to help them move to Centerville following graduation where they will reside until they leave in August for Wisconsin. Their programs don't start until September 2nd, so they figured they could join us for the reunion and Tim's welcome home before leaving for the Midwest.

[Mom] Saturday morning we stopped by the rest home to get Grandpa before continuing on to Kathy and Dick's. Lisa and family had been there most of the week since her kids are out for spring break and Deneice flew in on Friday from Ohio. We gathered at Kathy's and enjoyed lunch together. Several of the cousins joined us later that afternoon. Mandy (Charles' youngest) flew in to spend spring break in Provo with her brothers and so we got to see Shawn, his new bride, Annie, and Brandon for a few minutes before we left. Tenille also dropped by. Mike and Katie came later that afternoon, but we left for home shortly after three so we missed them.

Deneice rode with us and met her daughter, Katie, in Blackfoot and took her on to Rexburg for a week-long visit. Curtis and Marie blessed their new baby Sunday and Deneice was there for that as well as to attend Women's Week. Deneice will catch a ride back to Salt Lake with me on Sunday when I drive down to take care of Grandma Ilene after her surgery Monday. It will be fun to have the company. I know that Grandma has been very apprehensive about this upcoming surgery and I know she would appreciate everyone's prayers in her behalf. I will be there with her until Friday and

will be at the St. Mark's hospital during the days, leaving for her place about 7:30 each night. Daddy and SaraKay are going to be taking care of each other here at home. I've got most of the arrangements made and I think it will work out fine. I'm grateful to be able to help out with my folks since so much of the time I am not able to.

Sunday Shane Jenks reported his mission and Ryan gave his farewell. I sat there thinking about Tim and how we miss him. Shane came home so confident and mature and Ryan was so sweet in his expressions. It was a beautiful meeting!

Daddy had a ward conference to attend later that day and then we spoke at a youth fireside that night. At about 8:30 Nate called enroute from visiting Chad and Trish in their new home in Alpine and we had a brief visit before going to bed. Nate got up and was gone by 3 a.m. so we were glad to have that interaction with him again, however short.

Monday morning I left work early and got home in time to do some cooking before Mike and Katie arrived from their visit to Logan. They thoroughly enjoyed seeing the Cache Valley bunch and we were delighted that they could spend some time here with us. Becky and bunch joined us and we had a fun afternoon and evening together. Katie is a cute, energetic young lady and we felt badly that we didn't have a little more time with them before they left this morning for Provo.

Several of you have asked how this romance is progressing and I have had that same question in my mind, but I suspect I won't hear from Mike until he returns to Iowa on Thursday. Steve called with the news that he has secured a spot with Icon and is going to take the offer. The details have yet to be worked through but he seems happy about it and it will certainly give them a more stable and secure situation.

As far as we know now, August 14th is Tim's return date, the 18th his homecoming, and the 19-21 the reunion in Island Park. We will work out the details later but we thought we ought to let you know.

Shauntel, Randy, and Camille are at a convention in Orlando and visiting Disney World this week as well as spending a few days on an island somewhere off the coast of Florida. What fun for them. When I talked to Camille about it, she was absolutely thrilled with all their plans and especially about the chance to be in an airplane.

March 25, 2002

[Dad] We are working on the kitchen bit by bit and trying to get it finished. We won't be able to get the new flooring installed until next Monday. I got home just in time for chat last night and SaraKay and I enjoyed participating. Sue left yesterday about 3:00 and had her sister Deniece as company for most of the trip.

Saturday was our stake Mini-MTC. We invited over 100 Priest-age young men and had about 35 in attendance. It was a great success and helped solidify their desire and commitment to serving a mission. I conducted the opening session and referred to Tim's letter when he told about tracting out Jose and the "spirit was so strong, we were both smiling ear to ear and began to laugh together in our joy..." Then in the next letter he told about Jose's baptism with these words, "When he came up out of the freezing water, we embraced and then shook hands firmly, smiling and almost laughing as we rejoiced." I felt that those two passages say so much about the joy of bringing souls unto Christ.

Elder Olivas was there also, and he bore such strong testimony to the young men. He certainly is a great missionary. He said he had been by to visit our Jose and heard about our visit with Mike last week to deliver a cake and said that really meant a lot to Jose.

Friday night as we were eating supper we spontaneously decided to go to Harry Potter at the \$3.00 theatre in Idaho Falls. One of the only times I remember rushing off and leaving dirty dishes behind. As we got onto the freeway we could see flashing lights ahead and were alarmed to find that there had been an accident up ahead and traffic was barely moving. Just before the rest stop in the lavas, a fertilizer truck's trailer had overturned and spewed fertilizer all over the road. Once we were past that I put the pedal to the metal and we walked into the theatre just as the show was starting. Mom enjoyed HP much more than she did Lord of the Rings. It was a delightful night out.

At work I had an endowment committee meeting on Friday and got my new young man started in the store. Thursday night we had the first steering committee meeting for our council 2003 Jamboral. Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, I had Estate Planning Council meetings and some good appointments. I also had to set wheels in motion to solve a problem with a broken pulley at

the top of the flag pole in front of the Pocatello office-- about 45-50 feet up.

Wednesday night was High Council meeting and then after that we had to hold a disciplinary action against a fellow who had been in our stake, gotten a divorce after 30 years of marriage, and then had gotten involved with another woman and knew the only way to obtain forgiveness was to face the music and pay the necessary price. How sad, to live together with someone for 30 years and not get to know each other better and grow to love and appreciate each other. I left that meeting with such a feeling of gratitude for the wonderful relationship I have with my wife and for the way in which our feelings have deepened and broadened over the years. Love your companions--love is an active word requiring action and reaching out mentally and emotionally; serving and esteeming your spouse more than yourself and wanting to please. And, not supplanting with feelings for anyone or anything else. Love doesn't just happen--it takes work and patience and it grows line upon line.

In closing I wanted to share some thoughts from a book I have been reading about teamwork by John Maxwell. He quotes a Chinese proverb that states, "Behind an able man there are always other able men." He then challenges the reader to think of one act of genuine significance in the history of humankind that was performed by a lone human being. No matter what you name, you will find that a team of people was involved. That is why President Lyndon Johnson said, "There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves." (The Atonement is the only thing I could think of that came close.)

I liked this quote from Chuck Swindoll in *The Finishing Touch*: "Nobody is a whole team...We need each other. You need someone and someone needs you. Isolated islands we're not. To make this thing called life work, we gotta lean and support. And relate and respond. And give and take. And confess and forgive. And reach out and embrace and rely...Since none of us is a whole, independent, self-sufficient, super-capable, all-powerful hotshot, let's quit acting like we are. Life's lonely enough without our playing that silly role. The game is over. Let's link up." He then shares the statement "One is too small a number to achieve greatness."

April 3, 2002

[Mom] I appreciated Daddy taking care of the family letter last week. He and SaraKay got along

pretty well and worked hard to keep the house clean and the things done up for my return. I was so grateful to be able to help my Mom and Dad for a few days. Grandpa Arch had just been moved to a new care center just three blocks from the condo the Saturday before Grandma went into surgery so he was trying to get adjusted and learn the routine of the new center. Grandma's surgery was Monday morning and it made for a long day by the time she got out of recovery at 4:30 and I could get in to see her. She was able to come home Wednesday morning and was doing quite well. She had a set-back that evening when she had a reaction to the medication and it took several hours for that to wear off and for her to feel decent. Kathy brought Grandpa home Wednesday night for dinner and it was nice for him to see Grandma for a short while before we took him back to the rest home.

It was nice for me to have the time while Mom was in the hospital to visit leisurely with Dad and help him with some of his needs. I came home with renewed appreciation for Kathy and all she does to take care of and enrich their lives. She hosted them for Easter dinner and has also spent time at the rest home with the personnel there to make sure that Grandpa's needs are being taken care of.

Before leaving for Salt Lake on Sunday, Deniece arrived from Rexburg and we made the trip together. It was nice to have some time to visit and catch up on each other's lives. I dropped her off in Layton at Don's brother's place. She caught the plane to Ohio on Monday and arrived home about 2 a.m.

On Friday Steph and kids arrived from Logan and Becky and her bunch came for the day, too. We had an Easter egg hunt, colored eggs, and went swimming. It was really a fun day for us all. Chet was able to join us for supper and he and Daddy both helped out in the pool with the kids. That night we watched "Shrek" and visited. Saturday the kids played and Steph and I got in some good time talking over their upcoming decision as to where, when, and how. I'm always grateful that I don't have to make these tough decisions. Especially when there may be more than one good choice and then you have to decide which of all the good choices to choose.

It was so fun for us to have family here on Easter weekend. Daddy and I spoke to our ward's combined YW/YM Sunday morning and I had my regular Sunday school lesson so the rest of

Saturday was spent studying and pulling things together for those commitments.

They are laying the kitchen floor today and we are in a terrific mess. Daddy has really worked hard to get everything ready for the floor to be installed. We had several mishaps last night trying to get the dishwasher unplugged and moved and it was nearly 10:30 before he climbed into bed. I really appreciate all his help with these big projects. Best go. Love you all. Looking forward to Paul's graduation on the 25th and 26th. We will be helping them get moved to Centerville after convocation where they will be living for the summer. Last night Paul called to tell me that Jenny was in labor in the hospital. I almost went into shock until he said, "April Fools". I guess Bonnie isn't the only one who likes a good joke!

[Dad] Last Tuesday, Shane Summers, who does much the same work for the LOS Foundation that I do for the Boy Scouts, stopped by my office in Pocatello to drop off a book about the Spori building for Dad. Then he invited me to lunch and we went to the Sizzler. While there, I visited with Don Clark and his wife from Blackfoot and learned some of his life story. He is one of the only other men around that I has a Silver Explorer award from about 45 years ago. It was similar to the Eagle in those days, with a separate advancement scheme to reach the highest rank. The Venturing program now has initiated an advancement procedure for earning Bronze, Gold, and Silver Awards and a Ranger award that are quite exciting and give older scouts something to work for if they already have their Eagle.

Wednesday night was Council Program Meetings at the SRJHS and I talked to quite a few people about their plans to do a James E. West Fellowship. Thursday I went to Idaho Falls and took SaraKay to Becky's because she was on spring break. We then had dinner with Becky and Chet and family. However, I had some car problems that day--the alternator went out and Becky had to rescue me twice. We were able to get home that night and get the car in to be fixed the next day. I was so grateful that it was me having problems with the car instead of Sue in Salt Lake.

It was an interesting week having Sue gone. SaraKay and I tried really hard to keep things clean and the laundry done up. I also touched up the plaster and primed and painted twice the wall in the kitchen. Things really look a lot nicer and

finished with that done and all cover plates in place.

It was with exceeding great joy that we welcomed Sue back home Thursday night. Friday night was a lot of fun at the pool with the Bennion and Seely grandkids. They are all really confident and capable in the water. Even Tate did not want to get out after nearly two hours.

Sunday was a great day as we were able to celebrate Easter with a sweet fast and testimony meeting, another great Sue Larsen Gospel Doctrine class, and then our talks to the youth about the Atonement. I felt like we were really well received and did a good job for them.

Sunday night I moved out the washer, dryer, stove, and fridge in preparation for the flooring installation on Monday. It is really looking good and I know we are going to be pleased that we have gone through the inconvenience of the last couple days to have the job done right.

April 9, 2002

[Mom] It's Tuesday morning but I still feel like I have "jet lag" from the weekend. I'm probably also suffering from the change to Daylight Savings. It always takes me a few days to adjust to it and get my internal clock reset.

We thoroughly enjoyed our opportunity to attend general conference. We stayed at the Hilton and enjoyed the beautiful spring weather as we walked the four and a half blocks to conference and mingled with the crowds.

Even though I have been in the Conference Center before, it is always a thrill. Paul and Jenny came so that Paul could attend the Priesthood session one last time with Daddy before leaving for Wisconsin in a few months. Jenny and I had a good visit and then the Shipley's and their son and the four of us went to dinner. It was an unexpected treat that while we were waiting to get a table, Katie, (Deneice's daughter) walked up and said hello. She was visiting a friend in Sandy for spring break and they were out for the evening and just happened along. It was fun to visit with her and her roommates for a while. She is finishing up at BYU Idaho this month and will be leaving in August for a Humanitarian four-month mission doing volunteer work in an Ecuadorian orphanage.

We appreciated Stephani and Linds inviting SaraKay to stay with them on Saturday afternoon and evening. She had a great time and thoroughly

enjoyed the soccer, ping pong, and badminton. She was so tired from all the fun that she was sound asleep the whole way home!

We have had a circus around here with finishing up the kitchen. We scheduled to have the floor laid last Monday and so Daddy had to move all the appliances out into the garage in preparation. He also had to remove the toilet and dismantle it. Since they had to put in a new subfloor, the mess was terrific and we had a thin layer of dust on everything. By Thursday the job was done and that evening Daddy began getting everything put back in place. It was a big task and took several hours. On Friday he installed the dishwasher and for the first time in over a week, we felt like we could use our kitchen. The only problem was that I didn't like the linoleum. I mentioned to Daddy that I didn't remember it having so much gray in it and that I felt like it didn't match the Formica. Of course, with all the work that Daddy had put into the house remodel over these past few months, I didn't feel like I could say too much. But, the feelings just wouldn't go away. Yesterday I had to go to Blackers to check on something and I mentioned to the salesman that I wondered if they had installed the wrong linoleum. He walked back with me to the display rolls and I reviewed with him our conversation regarding the different colors and rolls. At the time we made our selection I had taken in a large sample of the Formica and another salesperson had also been in on the conversation. He remembered all this and realized that truly they had laid the wrong floor and that the one I had selected had brown overtones instead of gray. Well, to make a long story short, they will be relaying the kitchen floor and correcting the error. And what a bother for Daddy to go through all the hassle again, but he has been very sweet and willing.

SaraKay has been really busy lately with her science fair project, school work, and preparations for violin and piano festival. She has five numbers that she is memorizing for performance on April 20th. That is also the day that Daddy and I host the VIP luncheon for the scout council. It is also stake conference and Daddy has leadership sessions, conference sessions, and speaking responsibilities. I am supposed to be helping with a dinner and light luncheon in conjunction with conference so I'm feeling a little overwhelmed this week with it all. It's also been a squeeze play for daddy, trying to juggle the demands of his work with the demands of his church responsibilities. Hopefully he will be able to do all the preparatory

work and recruit some others to help out at the VIP luncheon while he attends conference meetings.

Sunday night Nate dropped in and we stayed up way too late visiting. He was in good spirits, having just spent a week in Billings finishing up his home and tying together a lot of loose ends with the closing. We got to laughing about things and it felt so good to see him happy and less stressed. It has been a treat to have him drop in occasionally and chat.

Grandpa and Alva Lu are on a cruise this week but following their return, they will be moving back to Idaho Falls. We are looking forward to having them a little closer. They have really loved the St. George area and feel good about their decision to "winter" there.

My Dad seems to be enjoying his new residence and Mom is able to go visit him twice a day now instead of just once. Grandma is feeling good and grateful that this surgery wasn't as tough as some she has had.

We are looking forward to Steve and Bonnie joining us this weekend to bless Anne Marie. It will be fun to visit with them about Steve's new job and how that's working out. Hopefully Becky and Chet will join us for the blessing.

[Dad] Conference was definitely the highlight of this last week. The Conference Center is so awesome; there is nothing like actually being there. We saw a lot of other people that we knew because of the way the tickets are distributed. It was nice to share the experience. When I was Bishop and would go to conference, there really wasn't much opportunity for Sue and I to share the experience because of the demands of such a young family.

For FHE last night we had an exciting time (maybe that isn't the most accurate and descriptive word for the experience-especially if you ask SaraKay) cleaning the garage. Then SaraKay shared a lesson based on a story from the New Era. Then we watched the Emperor's New Groove because of the high marks from family on chat. We thoroughly enjoyed it-though I don't think it will top the list as my favorite movie of all time like SaraKay said it would.

For the last couple of weeks, I have been fighting off a spring cold. It hit hard enough last night that I slept in this morning until 6:45. I think I am like Sue and still suffering some time lag with the change to Daylight Savings Time. It will take six

weeks for the sunrise to be at the same time it was last Saturday.

April 16, 2002

[Mom] We're out for snow closure today so I'm enjoying the chance to be home with SaraKay.

We had a storm move in yesterday about noon and by last night we had nearly 9 inches of heavy, wet snow. It continued through the night and is still coming down this morning. Every school from Pocatello to Rexburg is closed and the forecast is for more of the same for the next couple of days. What an amazing thing in the middle of April! Sunday in sacrament meeting the prayers were for more moisture but I don't think any of us thought we would get such a dramatic answer to our prayers. It will be interesting to see what the snow levels are after this week compared to last. Anyway, I'm trying hard to not be upset that spring has suddenly departed and we are in the grips of one of the worst storms of the winter.

On the flip side of it, SaraKay has been invited to go with the neighbors sledding at the gravel pits so she is in the process of getting out all the winter clothes and getting ready for that.

Last night Daddy and I went out and tried to brush off the snow from the pine trees. They were so droopy that we were worried that the limbs would break with the weight of the snow. A couple of years ago we had a freak storm that left trees coated with snow and ice and one of the Hannis beautiful big pine trees broke in two, the entire top half falling off with the weight of the snow. It was such a sorry sight. We have worked hard to get our trees to the stage they're at and we don't want to lose any of them.

I'm grateful that the storm waited until after the weekend to hit. I think of David and Andrea and their carload of little ones headed back to Boise on Sunday afternoon. It is about a four-hour trip for them in good weather and can be treacherous in a snow storm. It was a surprise to have them come for the weekend but we thoroughly enjoyed their short visit and the chance to be together.

Bonnie and her bunch returned to Logan a little later that afternoon following the dinner at Stan Williams'. The wind on Sunday became so ferocious that I worried that it might tip over Bonnie's van. Several years ago a wind came up that was so strong that it tipped over several semi-trucks on the freeway between Ogden and Tremonton. It's hard to believe, but it really did happen. We were relieved to hear from Bonnie

when she arrived home safely. Steve left earlier for the airport to catch a plane. He had a training in California for a couple days and will return on Thursday.

Our weekend was sweet but harried. It is so fun to visit and let the grandkids play but having that many small bodies under one roof can really get chaotic. Thank goodness the weather permitted them to play outside for most of the day. It was sweet to be gathered for the blessing. Anne Marie is such a beautiful and contented baby. She looked angelic in her white blessing dress and it was nice to have both the Benson's and the Larsen's present for the ordinance. It was an added treat to have been asked previously to perform a musical number for sacrament meeting and to recruit Andrea, Bonnie and Becky to help SaraKay with "The Hearts of the Children".

This week SaraKay's science project is due. She has worked hard to put it all together and done a great job with her presentation and data. This Saturday she has both violin and piano festival and is doing four solo numbers and a concerto. On the violin she is being accompanied by the piano so she has been practicing to be able to stay with the piano. On Saturday is the VIP luncheon also and then stake conference that evening. Luckily we don't have a dinner on Saturday for conference, just one Sunday between sessions. Daddy is speaking Saturday night and I'm hoping that I can finish up at the luncheon and make it to the 7:00 session to hear him. Next week is the Shakespearian play that SaraKay is in and then we leave for the weekend in Provo for Paul's graduation and their move. I am not convinced that Jenny is going to make it to her due date. We've given her strict instructions to wait until after graduation but I'm sure she'll deliver when she's ready!

Mike has a decision ahead regarding a knee injury. After several x-rays, compliments of Randy's team, it was discovered that he has a torn ACL and will need surgery. He hasn't been able to play basketball or frisbee and is trying to determine if any more damage will be done if he waits until his semester is completed before doing the surgery. His plan for summer is to find a job in Provo and get back into the dating scene. Two of his long-time friends, Ron Fuller and Coop, have invited him to room with them and he is excited at the prospect. He has been checking into possible dental office work in the area. I'm not convinced that his recovery won't take some of his vacation time.

Grandma Ilene is doing pretty good and getting her strength back. Grandpa is getting adjusted to his new location. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen should be back any day from their cruise. With the weather doing what it is, I highly doubt that they will be too anxious to join us here in Idaho this week.

[Dad] Last night before FHE I went out to Don and Norma McCandless' to interview them for their temple recommends. He is suffering from Parkinson's and is pretty much homebound. It is sweet to be able to make these "house calls" and to have good visits with longtime friends. For FHE we knocked snow off trees, shoveled off the walk and driveway, and then SaraKay had a lesson for us. I've been glad for her goals regarding teaching FHE lessons.

Sunday was a full day and I was grateful to be a part of Anne Marie's blessing and the dinner at the Williams's. They are such dear friends and it was fun to be at the river bottoms on their land for a picnic/barbecue on Saturday night with the Benson's, William's, and Larsen's. It is incredible the number of connections and friendships we have between those three outstanding families. I finished off Sunday with a stake YM correlation and signing recommends prior to chat. One of my accomplishments on Saturday was printing, collating, and stapling a four-page booklet for family goals and progress to prepare for the stake encampment we are having in July.

I have been working on the VIP reception details, the refreshments for the reception after the Council Recognition Night, Tiger Ear ingredients donations, Tiger Ear structure and setup in the remodeled booth under the grandstands, sending out billings and meeting notices for Fresh Water Ditch, and getting ready for stake conference this weekend. I am always glad to have plenty on my plate—it helps keep me out of mischief!! Gandhi said, *"There is more to life than increasing its speed."* It seems like we always have enough going on to keep life full and meaningful.

April 23, 2002

[Mom] We survived our weekend! When the week began I had my doubts about how it was all going to come together, but the snow closure on Tuesday really helped me have the extra time that I needed.

When I realized that I had Tuesday without school, Daddy suggested that we go to Sam's Club and get all the shopping done for the scout reception

and have that out of the way. Fortunately, I had made up my list a few days before and we hopped in the car and made a quick trip of it. I arranged to pay my neighbor, Melanie, to help me cook the potato salad on Friday afternoon and that was a wise decision. She is so smart about food preparation and had a wonderful recipe that worked great. Daddy took the afternoon off and between the three of us we prepared six gallons of salad in a couple of hours.

That night I listened to audio tapes of "Prelude to Glory" and cooked the broccoli soup for the Sunday luncheon. I finished cooking about 10 that evening but listening to the tapes was so enjoyable that I thoroughly enjoyed the time in the kitchen. After all that preparation I felt like I was going to make it through the next couple of days.

Saturday morning SaraKay had festival and did very well. She scored 98 or better on everything and was selected to receive an "Outstanding Performance Award" and asked to play her selection at a recital tonight along with other winners. (She isn't too happy about that)

Daddy spent most of Saturday setting up for the VIP reception at the high school library and by five o'clock when he left to attend his session with Elder Costa, he had things pretty well under control. SaraKay and I, along with some other volunteers, worked to get things on for the luncheon. Other years we have fed about 150 but I always prepare for 200 and usually have to pack a lot of things home. This year I fed 190 and hardly had a crumb of bread left. It was pretty scary! I do think everyone felt like the reception was a wonderful occasion. Daddy's volunteer counterpart handled things well and by 7:30 we were packed up and on our way home.

I didn't get to the Saturday night session until nearly 8:00 after unloading the car so I missed hearing Daddy give his talk, but he received lots of good comments and felt good about it. Following the session, I set up tables for the Sunday luncheon and then we came home and dropped into bed.

Daddy had early morning meetings and then there were two conference sessions, one at 10 and one at 1:00. We had a quick luncheon between sessions and then hurried to get done by the time the next session started. I enjoyed the second session more since I was through worrying about feeding people and all those arrangements.

The highlight of the day was when we wives were invited to have an evaluation session with Elder Costa and his wife following the day's activities. He was very complimentary towards the stake presidency and the unity and love he felt in the stake. Before he left, he shared with us that in all his travels, he had never felt the Spirit as strong in a leadership session as he had felt it that morning. He said that he knew there were others beyond the veil there assisting in the work. It was a sweet compliment and certainly left us a little awestruck.

He also shared with us the fact that when he was called to the First Quorum of Seventy and he and his wife realized that he would be 70 before he would be released, they made the decision to liquidate their belongings and move into an apartment so they would be able to devote their time to the Work. At the time of his calling, his wife had a beautiful collection of porcelain and she sold it so that it wouldn't be a burden to them. He said that they decided that as long as they had what they needed they would live very simply and unfettered by worldly things. They were such beautiful people and their comments made me think about my own life and priorities. I'm trying to decide if I need to make some changes.

I felt like Sister Costa was as lovely a lady as I have ever met and I felt a little like we were being instructed by Samuel the Lamanite and his wife. (Although I have to remember that Brazilians aren't necessarily the children of Manasseh). Anyway, it was a wonderful treat to be in the inner circle for this conference and get to rub shoulders with these outstanding leaders. By the way, Daddy is doing a great job and holding his own in this presidency. He is so kind and loving and the people certainly are free with their expressions of appreciation and love.

The owner of Riverside Boot and Saddle, Brian Waters, served his mission in Monterrey Mexico and he and some of his children made a trip down there to attend the temple open house. He took a package for Tim and although he never did personally see him, he did get to visit with the mission president and other missionaries and he said that he heard a lot of good things about him. That was a sweet report to receive.

One of Tim's best friends, Chris Murdock, had his welcome home last Sunday. Since we were so involved with conference and couldn't attend, I called him Sunday night to visit. He sounded so much like Tim that I really got homesick. He is

leaving for Provo this week to look for work and will be enrolling for summer term.

I visited yesterday with Jonie about the reunion and they are still trying to figure out whether they can come. Syd and Corey are being honored at a banquet tonight for their academic excellence. Hats off to Jeff and Jonie for stressing education in their home. Jonie is still working at Alex's school although not in his immediate classroom.

Paul's graduation is this Thursday and Friday. We are so excited to participate in a BYU graduation for another year! It will also be fun to renew our association with Jenny's folks. Sara Kay has a performance of her play, "The Taming of the Shrew" on Thursday afternoon and she is so sad that she will miss BYU graduation! We keep holding our breath that Jenny will attend, too. We'll keep you posted!

[Dad] Conference certainly was a delight and we received some good insights from Elder Claudio Costa. Eleven years ago, he was called as a mission president over a new mission—Brazil, Manaus which included the whole Amazon River basin, about 27,000 square miles. When he received his first batch of 14 Elders from America, he realized he would need to learn English to be able to really communicate with his missionaries. He began teaching himself English and he does very well. Part of the charm of his talks is listening to the Portuguese pronunciation of some of the English words he would say. Sitting by Sister Costa and watching her with a dictionary and a chart of irregular verbs during the conference was an inspiration.

Elder Costa was called to set up the Brazilian MTC and has had many other incredible challenges and experiences. One of the inspiring stories he told was of the faith of members from his mission that would travel four days by boat (small, not a luxury boat) and then four days by bus (not a luxury bus) and then spend five full days at the temple from the time it opened until it closed and then reverse the process to get home. They would do more endowments in that annual temple visit than many who live across the street from a temple. What faith! What commitment!

One of his discussions with us involved three distinctive features of the Church. Unlike the typical answers of prophets, priesthood, or Holy Ghost, he would emphasize three practical differences. The first was we build chapels with classrooms; we teach the gospel. The second was we visit our people; home teachers, visiting

teachers, visits by priesthood leaders, bishoprics. He suggested that as a stake presidency we visit each of our bishops in their homes twice a year to pray with the family, thank the family, and if needed, give priesthood blessings to the bishop. What a great idea!

Elder Costa also emphasized the importance of the manuals for teaching the gospel and that we should see that teachers teach the Church curriculum rather than the teacher's curriculum. He said over 50 people work fulltime for 3 years to develop each of our lesson books.

He also said that he and his wife have never been in debt. He has a motto, "If you pay interest-you are a loser." He suggested that each bishop take a sheet of paper and list on one side all the things he has to do personally and on the other side list all the things he can delegate. If he will do that and make sure he isn't personally doing anything that he can delegate, his yoke will be easy. He also suggested that each quorum presidency or group leadership spend one night per week from 7:00 to 10:00 with a one-hour presidency meeting and the last two hours spent in individual half-hour interviews. That would mean 12 members per week, 48 in a month, and 96 (which is a full quorum) in two months. The goal should be to interview every member every other month. He compared that interview schedule with missionary's interview schedule with the mission president (at least monthly) and said we would experience much greater retention through that process.

April 30, 2002

[Mom] It feels good to have made it through April for another year! Ever since we've had kids in college, April has been the big month, usually including the completion of the school year, graduation, the starting of summer work, moving, and some years, weddings. Add to this the VIP reception and stake conference and it becomes a marathon.

I thought I might include a few lines about each family in this letter. Grandpa and Grandma Larsen will be returning to Idaho Falls this Wednesday. Alva Lu had surgery a couple of weeks ago on a benign tumor on the palm of her hand. It has slowed her down a little (that's hard to do) and has delayed their return.

Grandpa and Grandma Richards are pleased with the new rest home situation. It is cleaner, quieter, and more responsive to Grandpa's needs. My

brother, Nate, who is working on a church in the Burley area, travels to Salt Lake often to see them and that has been special.

Steph and Linds received an offer from BYU. They have made an offer on a new home under construction in the Springville area which will be completed the middle of July. They will have to camp out for a couple weeks since their present landlords are returning the last of June, but they are grateful that this transition is nearly at an end. Josh is being baptized this weekend and we are planning to join them for that special occasion.

Shauntel and Randy are going to be volunteers at the Nauvoo Temple open house and had their first training session last week. They will be trading babysitting with a friend. They will also be hosting John and Laurel on the weekend of May 17th when they arrive from Michigan to tour the temple.

Jeff and Jonie are busy with work and family. They are still debating whether they will join us for the reunion.

Steve and Bonnie are still adjusting to a new baby and job. Steve misses the close friends he had at Cayenta, but he enjoys the work at Icon and is pleased to eliminate traveling from his job description.

David and Andrea are leaving this week for Puerto Rico. David works extensively with several companies located there and they have dove-tailed a business trip with their anniversary celebration and are excited for Andrea to get to experience David's mission area. Andrea's sister, Lisa, will be caring for the kids during their absence.

Becky and Chet just returned from welcoming Chet's brother, Jake, home from his mission. Chet has been traveling extensively these last few months in an effort to clear his agenda for the weeks following the arrival of the new baby. They are getting some bunkbeds set up to accommodate #3. Tate continues to progress and is saying a lot of new sounds and words.

John and Laurel have had a busy month including hosting Laurel's sister, Becky, and her family for a few days. Living in Michigan has made it so much easier for Laurel's family to visit occasionally and there is no lack of interesting places to go and things to see when they entertain guests. Laurel is enjoying good health with this pregnancy now that she is passed the morning sickness stage.

Mike has been struggling with one of his classes that includes intricate work with his hands. He puts in plenty of time trying to learn the skills but it hasn't paid off yet. Add to that his knee injury and he has felt pretty discouraged. He has an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon on May 9th to find out just what to do about his torn ACL. He is hoping to get it taken care of before he comes home for the summer break. He is in touch with a dentist in Salt Lake through Aunt Kathy who may be able to give him work for a couple months.

Paul graduated on Thursday with honors. As usual, we took a lot of pictures at all the favorite spots and relished the time together. Despite a late spring, all the trees on campus were in full bloom and we took the opportunity to walk across campus and see some of the new additions including the underground library. I am in awe of the beautiful campus and grateful for the opportunity all of you have had to share in that environment.

Jenny's folks joined us on Thursday for the commencement exercises and Becky and Chet made the trip to be with us on Friday. It worked well for them since they were in Utah for Jake's homecoming. Of course, Maddie and Tate had about had enough of long meetings by the time convocation was over but then so had the rest of us. I know it is always a hassle with little ones in those kinds of situations, but we appreciated them being there. Jenny's Grandma and Grandpa Johnson were also there to show support.

Friday morning Daddy and I joined Jenny's mom and a bunch of Cutler cousins and helped Paul and Jenny finish loading and cleaning before we went to convocation at 11:00. Paul and Jenny have been packing up their possessions these last few weeks and taking several boxes each time they have visited Jenny's family in Bountiful so we were able to finish in time. They will be living this summer in Centerville in a basement apartment. Jenny's grandmother Cutler passed away a few months ago and both the upstairs and basement apartments are being used by married grandchildren for the summer months. They will have the use of the garden spot, a spacious yard, an orchard and other country amenities. They are ready to escape the hub-bub of college life and have a few months of relaxation before leaving in August for Wisconsin. The baby hasn't come yet.

I thought that I would like to mention something that happened (or maybe didn't happen) on Friday that made me grateful for the Lord's protection.

Daddy, Paul and Jenny's brother, Spencer, had loaded two pickups with furniture Friday morning and secured the loads with ropes and bungee cords. Spencer left about 11 in the small pickup for Centerville while the rest of us attended convocation and then we followed Paul and Jenny as they drove the other pickup to the apartment later that afternoon. When we got there, the guys began unloading the big pickup while Jenny and I unloaded the cab and our car. When that was done, Spencer backed the small pickup up and we were ready to unload it. I walked over to the side and noticed that the two mattresses were held down by a lattice work of rope and a couple bungee cords. Anxious to finish unloading and get on our way, I took ahold of the bungee cord and unhooked it. It shot through the air like a bullet out of a gun barrel. Had anyone been standing on the other side of the load, it probably would have hit them right in the face! The minute it happened I realized what a stupid thing I had done! Fortunately, no one was on that side of the load and no one was hurt. As you can guess, I have spent the last few days imagining just how bad it could have been!

We received a couple letters from Tim today. I have struggled a little with his new mission president, feeling like he is too hard on the missionaries, but Tim has not been critical of him and I'm grateful that he is being meek and teachable. This past week Cody Adams and Kelly Anderson returned and reported. That leaves just Tim and Trent out of that bunch of good friends. Every time I see one of them or their parents, they ask about Tim and I am happy to report that he is doing well and immersed in the work. We are so proud of him.

SaraKay enjoyed her part in the play, "Taming of the Shrew". They had three performances and it was obvious that the kids really had a great time with it. In one scene Petrukio pours a pitcher of water over SaraKay's head (a servant) and SaraKay was in charge of seeing that there was a small amount of water in the pitcher before that scene. For the last performance someone else added some without SaraKay knowing it and so it was pretty funny when she got more of a shower than she expected! Anyway, she has been sad that it is over and life is back to normal. It's hard to believe that in two months she will be in Young Women's! She has mixed emotions about it. This week they are having dance instruction time for the combined YW and YM and she is glad she

doesn't have to go! Oh, well, she'll get past that soon enough!

Daddy and I came home from our weekend tired but grateful to have another BYU degree in the family and to have helped Paul and Jenny a little. Jenny's family have been so good to them over this past year and we were pleased to be in the right place at the right time to lend a hand.

Thursday night after we returned from commencement, we were both tired and agreed that it is a good thing we are running out of children because we are almost running out of energy. Seriously, though, I have to admit that I never visit BYU without saying a silent, heart-felt prayer of gratitude for the many miracles that have happened that have enabled each of you to get your education. Whether it was a needed scholarship, a summer's job, a part-time job on campus, or the health and fortitude to keep plodding on despite the difficulty of the courses, the way has been opened for each of you to reach your educational goals and move on to other challenges and fields of endeavor. I humbly acknowledge His loving kindness and support and pray that He will get a good return on His investment.

[Dad] A friend of mine in Idaho Falls had stake conference this week and he shared with me some things that Elder Melvin Hammond spoke about. Much of the information was the same as we had received from Elder Costa the previous week. One thing he mentioned was a survey of mission presidents as to the most desirable characteristics in new missionaries. They responded that they could teach a new missionary the Gospel or the language or help them gain a testimony but if they didn't know how to work—if they hadn't learned that in their homes—there was little they could do to help them overcome that deficiency. I am grateful that each of you are such hard workers and that you are accomplishing all that you are in your lives. I know that Tim will continue to be successful because of that work ethic.

Another thing Elder Hammond talked about was not bragging from the pulpit about having a perfect family and putting those in the congregation with problems on a guilt trip. I know the Lord has truly blessed us as a family and I know also that where much is given, much is expected. I pray that we will measure up to His expectations.

Sunday was another full day with presidency meetings, Cody Adams's welcome home, home teachers, Seminary board meeting, interviews, and a bi-stake fireside. We had Lance Richardson (author of "The Message") speak and we had a full house—more than we had for either session of stake conference. He did a great job with his talk about testimony and service and I was able to relax and enjoy it. Sara Kay said that kids were talking about it on Monday at school, so you know it had to be good. He told of some incredible experiences and hardly touched on the near-death experiences related in his book. We had a number of people that came to hear him speak that had lost loved ones in the recent past and my heart went out to them—seeking some solace from where ever they can find it. Richard Bach said, "Here is a test to see if your mission on earth is finished. If you are alive, it isn't."

May 7, 2002

[Dad] Yesterday we received the Church News—a special Nauvoo Temple issue. What a treat it is to read about the open house, President Hinckley's feelings about the temple, some of the interesting details of construction, the original plans and how they came into the hands of the Church, etc. We started our FHE late because SaraKay had a softball practice, but we decided to read and talk about some of the articles about Nauvoo and relish in this experience a little.

Uncle Nate came by about 9:30 and we talked to him about it also. We all feel such an outpouring of the Spirit with the erection of this monument to the faith and sacrifices of the early saints. We began talking about our plans to go East sometime during harvest and to be able to go through the Nauvoo Temple with Mike and Shaunnie and Randy.

Sunday was a relatively light day. Presidency meeting lasted until 9:30 because we were discussing some training President Shipley had received last Sunday along with all the stake presidents from this area with Elder Scott Grow—our area president. With the Bishop having full responsibility for missionary work as well as the youth and all the other responsibilities that come his way (because of our traditional view of the bishop as the one to go to for any problems or to give succor and counsel in any situation) the brethren are concerned about how we can lighten the Bishop's load. One of the ways is increased emphasis on the role of the High Council to work with Melchizedec Priesthood quorum and group

leaders to be more proactive in visiting and interviewing their quorum members and fulfill their responsibilities in the three-fold mission of the Church. We are meeting with all our Bishops on Wednesday night to discuss a vision and methodology to effect these changes.

Sunday night was the Young Women's meeting to honor the senior girls that had earned their Young Women Recognition Award. There are sure some special young women from our stake that were recognized that night. We also were able to go to Idaho Falls and visit with Dad and Alva Lu. It is so good to have them back and be able to visit them. I look forward to redeeming my coupon that I gave him for his birthday for a temple session and dinner.

Last Saturday we got up early and we were just ready to leave for Logan for Josh's baptism when we received a phone call from Paul. Jenny had had their baby that morning. Mom and baby are both well and they are going to name her Beth. We are so grateful that all is well and know Paul and Jennie will be great parents.

We arrived in Providence at 9:00 and helped Becky and her kids get to the baptism at 9:30. It was a sweet service, well organized with excellent talks and three excited baptismal candidates: Josh and two girls from sister wards in their stake. Josh, Sam, and Kate sang a special number and Steph accompanied for all the music. Linds performed a flawless baptism and gave a wonderful blessing to Josh when he confirmed him. We gathered for a barbecue at Steph and Linds' after the baptism and pictures. It was a wonderful morning and a special gathering of family on both sides. Much of Lindsay's family was there as well as Steve and Bonnie, Becky, and us. It was a wonderful time together.

The biggest event with my work last week was going to the sugar factory in Twin Falls to pick up a half a ton of sugar for the Tiger Ear booth. It was raining and I had to buy bought a tarp and some rope to keep the sugar dry. I was able to get it here and unloaded in the Blackfoot Scout Office without incident. Thursday night, Dan Marley and I went to the Wolverine District meetings and began the transition to our new responsibilities.

Staff meeting yesterday was a continuation of the transition. I am in favor of most of the changes that are being made as responsibilities are realigned in the council. Most of these changes are not being put into place until July 1, but at

least they are being defined and we know where we are headed now.

[Mom] Daddy has given you a brief run-down of our weekend. It was great to get that early morning call from Paul and know that both Jenny and Beth were doing fine. It had been a difficult delivery, complicated by the fact that the baby was coming breach. Several times the doctor attempted to turn her so that she would come head first. When these attempts failed, they were preparing to take her C-section. After one last attempt, the baby turned. It was then discovered that her hand was up over her head and the doctor was worried that the shoulder would come with the head and so he manipulated Beth's little arm so that the hand was on the side of her head and she was able to emerge that way, none the worse for wear. We are so grateful that everything is alright and that Jenny is getting her strength back. She came home late Sunday evening. We are planning to make a quick trip to Centerville on Friday and spend a few hours. Beth was 6 lb. 9 oz. and 19 inches long. Congratulations!

Our time in Logan was enjoyable. It was such a treat to get reacquainted with Linds' siblings and Doug and Naomi. They are such sweet gracious people! Josh looked like a little angel in his white baptism clothes with his white hair and cute smile. Following the confirmation, the fellow conducting the service invited Steph to bear her testimony and it was a special bonus for us to share that experience. It was also sweet to have Steve and Bonnie and family and Becky et al able to attend. The barbeque afterwards was delicious! The weather was so pleasant that the children played outside and we had a chance to visit and catch up on the progress of Lind's situation. IBM is certainly willing to go the extra mile to keep Linds and work with him on his terms. I truly feel that they are being guided in their deliberations.

Daddy also mentioned our FHE last night. The three of us sat on the couch and read through several articles in the Church News regarding the Nauvoo temple. There were pictures of the interior and exterior of the temple and details regarding much of the construction. There were some tears shed as we read and talked about our feelings regarding this wonderful upcoming occurrence! And to think that several of you will have the chance to be there in person and participate in that historic time!

A while later Nate arrived to pick up his car and he visited with us about it. We showed him the article

and questioned him about some of the construction details. It was obvious that his feelings for Nauvoo and the saints who sacrificed so much for the Kingdom were very similar to ours. Several of Nate's family are making the trip to Nauvoo to go through the temple this summer.

I asked him regarding his opportunity to speak at the dedication of the chapel he just completed in the Billings area. Grandma Ilene had told me that the stake president requested that he speak and I hadn't heard how it had gone. At our prodding, he shared with us some of his comments. He said that initially he presumed that he should only take a couple minutes but the stake president made it clear that he was to take 15-20. He figured that most of the congregation would assume he would give some highlights of the construction process but he said that in his preparation he felt prompted to take a different angle. In his talk he told of his memories of living in the Black Hills of South Dakota and of the small branch of the church in Belle Fourche that met in the back of the public library building each Sunday for their meetings. He could remember going with Grandpa Arch before the meeting would begin and of sweeping out the beer bottles and cigarette butts from the previous night's festivities before the members of the branch would arrive for meetings. He then told of being a missionary in Venezuela and of holding sacrament meeting in a ramshackle lean-to each Sunday. If the weather happened to be bad and it rained, the rain would run down the make-shift roof and through the timbers and onto the people unfortunate enough to be seated toward the back of the lean-to.

He said that he had often thought of those humble situations as he was working on the building and recognized how fortunate we are to have such wonderful facilities. But he pointed out that the building was only brick, wood, cement, trusses, and other materials. The thing that would truly make the building all it could be would be if the saints who entered in were worthy to be there, compassionate and loving to those around them, and striving to do the things the Lord required.

Although the hour was late, Daddy and I appreciated Nate sharing his feelings with us and we were so grateful for the opportunity to have that short but tender time together. I know that Nate's family right now are struggling with a situation with Tanner. He has quit going to church and some friends are encouraging him to leave behind the teachings of his family. If you can find

room in your family prayers for one more petition, please include Tanner.

With the coming of spring, my heart turns to yard and garden. We did get our peas and onions planted and weeded the few strawberry plants that I put in last fall, so hopefully we have made a beginning on our garden project. The weather has been so miserable and cold and so windy that most days I probably wouldn't want to be outside anyway, but for the first time since I started working last January, I am feeling overwhelmed by all the demands on my time. But, just a few more weeks and summer will be here. I am looking forward to having that break!

May 15, 2002

[Mom] Yesterday was such a beautiful day that the minute I got home from work I headed outdoors to work in the yard. Our weather has been so cold and windy this past month that I could count on one hand the number of pleasant days. By this time of year, I am growing tired of it and ready to move south.

We spent part of family home evening planting corn, rototilling the garden and resurrecting the strawberry plants I put in last fall. The peas and onions we planted a couple weeks ago are peeking through and that is reassuring.

Last Friday we picked up SaraKay from school and drove to Centerville to see Paul and Jenny and their new baby. It was nice to have them all moved into their spacious apartment and to have time to visit. Beth slept almost the whole time we were there but just before we left, she humored us and woke up and looked around. She is a darling baby with lots of blond hair. Jenny looked as good as new and is enjoying being a stay-at-home mom. We enjoyed her letter and the cute pictures she e-mailed regarding the labor and delivery.

Thanks to all of you, I had a wonderful Mother's Day. Before the weekend was over, I had heard from nearly everyone and it was fun to get the cards and calls. Becky and Chet joined us for dinner and they were here when we called Tim so they visited with him for a few minutes, too. He has appreciated everyone's efforts to keep in touch. I was able to visit with him about the upcoming school year and plans for registration and housing. It probably seems premature to him, but before we know it, September will be here and he'll be in Rexburg in school again.

I have envied Shauntel, Randy, and Mike their opportunity to work as volunteers in the Nauvoo Temple. I encouraged Shauntel to write her feelings about the experience. She shared with me some of her insights and I feel like this will be such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that she will want to record for posterity. Hopefully Randy and Mike will do the same. Isn't it interesting that Tim is also involved right now in a temple open house? His latest letter said that some nights they don't get home until 2 a.m. because of the demands of the work. It's wonderful to live in this day and age and to see the prophesies of the last days coming to pass.

Dave and Andrea arrived home from their anniversary trip to Puerto Rico on Wednesday. Andrea and I visited a long time on Friday night about all the experiences and fun they had. David was able to visit many of his mission friends and converts and also go on splits with the missionaries a couple of times. They found time for the beach and biking and touring as well and came home refreshed and ready to get back into things. A big thanks goes to Andrea's amazing sister, Lisa, who brought her three small children and took care of seven under the age of 8 for over a week. She is such a sweet young mother and devoted sister!

[Dad] Sunday was a little slower day with Presidency meeting, our regular meetings, and recommend interviews. It was fun to have Becky, Chet and family join us for a Mother's Day dinner and be a part of Tim's Mother's Day call. It was so good to talk to him; I am getting trunky for him to come home.

Mom was delighted with the book of LDS art that we gave her along with a new bear. It was such a beautiful day and we enjoyed sitting out back on the swing and lawn chairs and visiting while the kids played.

Saturday I had a meeting for the planning of the Jamboral for next year. We are hoping to have 16,000 scouts at the fair grounds for that event. The theme is Pathfinders and Patriots since it is the anniversary of Lewis & Clark and much to do about them and their route through Idaho. Then I went to Idaho Falls for part of a Wood Badge staff development meeting and while I was there, I went by to visit with Dad and check up on him after his last fall. He was in a great deal of pain but nothing that some time and healing wouldn't cure nor that a doctor could do anything about. He is taking it easy for a while and not going

anywhere while he regains his strength. It is sure hard to see him suffering. I am always amazed at his high tolerance for pain.

Last week I went to Wolverine's Round Table and had a good visit with some of the folks there from Shelley, Basalt and Firth. It is always pleasant to visit meetings like that and to know a few people and have them pleased to see me there in my Scouting role.

I was able to have a wisdom tooth pulled and to save the tooth ahead of it that had a 21-year-old gold crown, but my mouth has been a little tender from the experience.

In closing, I just wanted to share this quote from Barbara Bush: "At the end of your life, you will never regret not having passed one more test, not winning one more verdict or not closing one more deal. You will regret time not spent with a husband, a friend, a child or a parent. Fathers and mothers, if you have children ... they must come first. You must read to your children, you must hug your children, you must love your children. Your success as a family ... our success as a society ... depends not on what happens at the White House, but on what happens inside your house."

May 29, 2002

[Mom] Last week was a flurry of activities at school including an appreciation luncheon, a trip to a rest home where the children read to the residents, preparation for a talent show, and a revised daily schedule consisting of labs and projects. On Thursday we had a field trip to the zoo and ISU museum. It made for a long, noisy but very interesting day. The time at the museum was especially rewarding and informative. The museum staff provided us with three presentations: one about the progress of the space station presently being built by 16 nations, one about the geology of Idaho, and the last one about dinosaurs. You can guess which one the kids like the best!

It was nice to have a long weekend and get some things done around the yard and garden. We got most of the garden planted and even put out some bedding plants. On the way home from work today I got some hot caps to put over the plants until the fear of frost is passed.

Sunday afternoon Chet left for Minneapolis where Melaleuca was hosting a fireworks display Monday night. We invited Becky and kids to go with us to the cemetery to decorate Grandma's

grave and then to spend the night. Monday, they helped us with yard work and gardening and it was fun for us and broke up the day for them. Becky is ready to have the baby and has been pretty miserable this last week. Although the due date isn't until June, the doctor may induce labor this week while Chet is home and available.

Last Thursday the lino man finished laying the floor and we were able to move the appliances back into the kitchen. Hopefully we are through with home improvements for a while. The floor looks very nice and I especially appreciated all the work that Daddy did to help bring the project to a successful completion, including reinstalling the toilet in the small bathroom by the kitchen.

Yesterday Mike and Randy put in their last shift at the temple open house. On the previous Saturday Mike took two nonmember friends with him. He said it was an interesting experience to see their response. Uncle Nate and his family had tickets for 7:30 a.m. on Monday and had originally planned to stay Sunday night at Shauntel and Randy's but at the last minute they decided to drive straight through to Nauvoo so that they didn't have to get up and be gone by 5:30.

On Sunday chat I asked Shauntel how she was doing with all the company and she said that it had been nice to be close and participating these last few weeks in conjunction with the Nauvoo Temple open house.

I have wondered if the opening of the BYU program in Nauvoo might help bring a few more prospects to the area for Mike. He heard last week from a girl he dated a little right after his mission. She has recently returned from serving a mission and was just writing to see how he was getting along. He is going to follow up on it since he quite liked her but the relationship struggled because his roommate also like her and it got tense. Mike will probably be having his knee surgery on June 10th. The doctor who is performing the surgery is a renowned sports medicine doctor so Mike would like to get it taken care of in Iowa instead of waiting until he returns home for the summer.

We are going to Centerville Sunday for Beth's blessing. I'm counting down the days until school is over and I have my days back again. The weather is getting nicer and we've actually had some warm lovely evenings.

[Dad] Just a few quick thoughts. I have been starting to pack up some of the things in my office

and to clean things out in preparation for moving to Blackfoot next month. Most of the stuff dealing with my current endowment director position will be boxed up and moved to Idaho Falls in anticipation that the new director, whenever they hire him, will be working out of that office. We spent a day cleaning out some closets and old stuff stored in the scout office going back to 1967. We filled five dumpsters full and hardly made a dent in the stuff that needs to be cleaned out and organized. Much of the remaining stuff needs to be taken to camps and utilized there.

Memorial Day was a fun work day and it felt good to get things settled in the kitchen, laundry, and bathroom, finally. We are fighting to stay ahead of the weeds and to keep our place looking neat and trim. I have been riding my bike outside for eight miles each day and also running a little to work on my knee. The riding and the therapy I have been doing here at home has strengthened my knee and lightened up the joint so that it is approaching normalcy. We were delighted to get three letters from Tim yesterday. He sounds great and is working hard and having joy in the harvest.

[Mom] Our district didn't have school today so SaraKay went with me to work. I was in charge of a talent show that took about an hour and then she helped me with getting all the displays in Mrs. Hartley's classroom removed and stored away. It was fun having her tag along.

Tomorrow we both have school. It is my last day but she doesn't get out until Friday. She is bemoaning the fact that she'll miss her classmates but we've got a lot of fun things planned and she is especially excited for Girl's Camp and the family reunion.

We returned last night from a fun visit to Utah. We left about one on Saturday and drove to Grandma's. We had arranged to have dinner there with her and Grandpa. When we arrived she met us at the door announcing that a wind storm had knocked out the power and we wouldn't be able to use the oven for supper. The last power outage had lasted six hours and she wasn't very hopeful that this one would be fixed any sooner.

We decided to go get Grandpa at the care center and then get some Kentucky Fried. Just a few minutes after we arrived back at the condo, the power was restored and we were able to carry on with our original plan. We had a thoroughly delightful time and left about 8 p.m. to return Grandpa to the rest home. Grandma seems to be doing much better and is feeling good again. We

were so glad to have the time with them, especially since Kathy and Dick have been in Arizona for a few days. This next weekend Nate will be with them while he attends a convention with Jeppson Construction.

We arrived at Paul and Jenny's about nine and spent the night with them. They had done a lot of work to prepare their home and yard for the big event on Sunday. We enjoyed the visiting time with them, holding Beth, and catching up on Paul's work and their other involvements.

Their meeting Sunday morning was at nine and so it made for an early morning. After I got myself ready, I offered to help Jenny with Beth. We gave her a bath and dressed her in a beautiful dress that Jenny had borrowed from her aunt who had made it. It came complete with a white petticoat and a cute white band and bow for her hair. There was a tiny gold pin that secured the back neckline and while Jenny did some other things, I attempted to fasten the pin so that it would be out of sight. Partway through the process I pricked my finger and was grateful that I hadn't pricked Beth. A few seconds later I noticed some red spots on the back of the dress and realized to my horror that it was from my bleeding finger. I rushed Beth to the bathroom and frantically tried to remove the blood with cold water (before Jenny spotted it, no pun intended) with SaraKay giving assistance. Fortunately, the blood came right out and the dress looked good as new for the special event!

Paul gave a beautiful blessing and it was sweet to have several Cutler uncles, Jenny's Grandpa Johnson, both of Beth's grandfathers as well as Steve and Lindsay in the circle. After the block of meetings, we all returned to their house for dinner. The weather was beautiful and we were able to be outdoors in their back yard. Jenny had prepared barbequed beef and homemade ice cream and the rest of us helped with salads. It really tasted good! By four o'clock we were on our way home and arrived here in time to catch part of "Chat". About 8:30 Nate dropped in en route to Burley and we had a short visit with him before he left to complete his trip.

I called Mike today to see how he was getting along. He has been increasingly frustrated with the situation he is in. He is struggling to pass off his practical exams (a two-credit class). If he doesn't pass off the assignments he has to go back in and retry the procedure. Sometimes this is a several hour process. In the meantime, he has a difficult time staying up with the rest of the class

who are able to give their efforts to the daily assignments while some of them are struggling to do daily assignments plus the other redo's. Next Monday he is going in for the surgery on his knee and that has been weighing pretty heavily on his mind, too.

I know he would appreciate everyone's prayers in his behalf. He will be having his surgery on Monday morning and will be home that same day. His summer is pretty much up in the air right now until he finds out just how he does in this class and how laid up he is going to be with his recovery.

Alva Lu called last week to let us know that Grandpa Larsen has been diagnosed with Parkinson's. The doctor's put him on some medication but so far it has made him sick to his stomach so they are going to have to try something else. We are all hoping that his medication will relieve some of the symptoms and give him a better quality of life. His balance has been a major concern and he has been very fortunate that he has not broken any bones when he has fallen. We are so grateful for all the loving care he receives from Alva Lu. Remember him in your prayers.

I thought you'd like to know that Jacob (Rick and Terry's oldest) will be leaving for his mission to England the last part of June. His farewell is on June 23rd. They have extended an invitation to everyone in the family who can make it. We are planning to attend and are so pleased for them. That same weekend will be Jeanette and Josh's wedding reception here at our stake center.

Also, on June 21st and 22nd the Richards are having a get-together in Salt Lake. We will be having an evening barbeque and visiting that Friday night and something Saturday morning. We hope that those who live close will be able to make it to some of these activities. Lisa will be letting us know the details in a week or so and I will pass the word along. We are planning to leave early afternoon on Saturday so that we can be back here to catch the reception that evening, too. Busy weekend but all such fun and wonderful stuff! Remember Becky in your prayers on Wednesday. She is having labor induced so that there aren't any surprises while Chet is out of town on business. SaraKay and I are going to try to help out and help her get the transition made.

[Dad] The transition continues with my job—I am excited about the change in duties and responsibilities and it will be nice to not be asking

for money every time I see a prominent scouter. It is going to be a lot different to have to meet my goals partially through encouragement of others and helping them to meet their share of the overall objective.

I hate to see school come to an end. I have especially enjoyed the last few weeks helping SaraKay with her math. I love solving equations and I hope that some of my enthusiasm and methodology has rubbed off on her.

Last night for home evening, SaraKay taught us about our bodies being temples—she had some great visual aids and things written on the white board. Then we went over to the tennis courts and played tennis for about an hour. Afterwards we left her examples of healthy nuts, cheese, apples, and bagels and headed in to Rupe's for an ice cream.

Sue wrote about last weekend's experience but I would just like to add how delightful it was to be able to be a part of Paul, Jenny, and Beth's big day. She is such a little doll with an angelic attitude to go with her peaceful spirit. She is named for her great grandma Beth Cutler and in his blessing Paul referred to the great pioneer heritage she has from both sides of the family. In the Gospel Doctrine class that day there was quite a bit said about the cycles of obedience and disobedience of the children of Israel and the importance of passing on the beliefs and testimonies of one generation to the next and then to the next. How difficult that is and yet how crucial!!

Last Friday night and Saturday morning before we left for SLC we were able to get a bunch of work done on our yard. Mowing, putting out Bare Spot along the driveway and fence lines and spraying for dandelions all takes time and it is a relief to be able to get it done.

June 10, 2002

[Mom] The big news of the week is that Larsen Bruce Seely arrived Wednesday, June 5th, weighing in at 7 lb. 14 oz. Becky went in to the hospital at 7 a.m. for two separate doses of antibiotic which curtails the infection that usually accompanies giving birth. The doses are taken at hour intervals and so by 10:30 they were ready to induce labor. Things moved along rapidly and Larsen was born about 11:30. He is a beautiful little boy with lots of jet-black hair. Becky came home Thursday afternoon and Chet took the day off and entertained Maddie and Tate.

On Friday I spent the day with Becky and Sara Kay joined us after she finished up her last day of school. Daddy spent that night in Island Park at a scout function and we spent the night at Becky's. We left for home at about three on Saturday. She and Chet made it through Sunday and got along great and Becky is on her own today. SaraKay and I will go tomorrow and see if we can help out a little again. She is feeling good and Larsen is a very contented baby, just eating and sleeping most of the time. We are so grateful that everything went well and that both mom and baby are doing well.

This morning I was able to reach Mike at the University Hospital in Iowa City. He had arrived at the hospital at 6:15, gone into surgery at eight, and was resting and settled in his room by the time I called at 1:00. He said the surgeon said that there were no surprises and if his recovery went as planned, he would be released tomorrow. We appreciate Shauntel and Randy being there for him. He said that when he was wheeled into his room, they were there to greet him, but he was so tired and groggy that he doesn't remember visiting much before he fell asleep again.

Mike only has two days of classes this week so the break will give him a couple days to recoup before manning his crutches and trying to get around. He passed off an important practical last week and has been turning summersaults ever since! (Not really, considering the state of his knee) He feels like his skills are finally starting to come. He even had his first live (other than other students) patient last week and he said that it was very pleasant. Shauntel has agreed to be his last patient of the semester. He said most students ask a friend or family member to do that for them so that they could relax a little towards the end of the semester and not worry about who they would be working on. Thanks to Shaunnie for being the guinea pig!

Last week Grandpa Richards had an interesting experience. When Grandma went in to visit him, he wouldn't wake up. She tried everything that she could to rouse him and she could tell that he was trying to, but finally she went to get help and they transported him to the hospital by ambulance. By the time she arrived at the hospital, he was awake. He could remember the efforts to try to awaken him but he said that he couldn't get his body to respond. The doctors said that that is typical for Parkinson's. The body doesn't always respond to the brain stimulus and hence the

irregular movements. It was pretty scary for a while, but Grandpa is taking it in his stride.

Now for the information regarding upcoming events. This Saturday SaraKay and I will be driving to Logan to help with Steph and Linds' move. They have loaded a lot of boxes and already moved them to the new residence, but on Saturday they are going to be moving the big stuff. They have invited Steve and Paul to help with that and the rest of us to help with the small stuff. Bonnie and I are planning to feed the crew at noon. They hope that by early afternoon they will have things pretty much cleared out. They are still negotiating with their builder and are hoping to see some progress on their new home in the next few weeks.

On Saturday, June 22nd there will be a reception for Mark and Rita's daughter, Jeanette, in our stake center. The next day at one o'clock is Jacob's missionary farewell in Pocatello. Anyone who will be attending is invited to bring a salad to the dinner following the meeting. On Saturday, July 6th, Rachel is being baptized and confirmed. The meeting will be at 10 a.m. and Bonnie is planning a luncheon afterwards for family and friends. The next day, the 7th will be the day that Becky and Chet will bless Larsen in Idaho Falls. They will be hosting a dinner following church (11:00) and will let us know what our food assignment will be.

Friday when school was dismissed for the summer, SaraKay brought her report card home with the news that school would resume on August 19th! I couldn't believe it! We had already learned that the Logan members of the family were going to have to leave the reunion early because their school was starting on Wednesday and I've been trying to decide what to do with our reunion plans. After consulting with some of you the following adjustments have been made.

The reunion will begin on Saturday, August 17th, early afternoon. We will take the kids swimming and then will have a cookout here at the house with volleyball, badminton, and crochet. Following meetings on Sunday (including Tim's welcome home) we will host a dinner for family and friends here at about 1:00. Hopefully that will give all of you a chance to see some of the extended family as well as provide more visiting time. Monday Daddy will go to Island Park and open the camp up and anyone who wants to go and stay a couple days is welcome to do that. There will not be anything organized as far as food is concerned but the waterfront will be available, bikes for biking,

and hiking. I will probably drive up on Monday night with SaraKay so she has a day for the waterfront and then I will drive back so she can be in school on Wednesday. Each of you can make your plans and just let us know what you can do. If some of you with small children want to go for a day or split up and some of you go and some stay here, that will work fine for me. We'll keep in touch.

Please keep this letter for reference. Several of you have asked regarding helping with food for the reunion and I will be figuring that out soon and let you know. Shauntel and Camille will be leaving Iowa in July and come home for an extended stay while Randy takes some training in D.C. over the summer. Mike should be arriving home for the summer the second week of June.

[Dad] For FHE tonight we went to Blackfoot for a softball game for SaraKay. It has been so cold and miserable today and with the wind blowing right through light jackets or sweaters--winter parkas were the only way to stay warm enough. Our team won, 15-14. The last few days my leg has been bothering me--whenever I stand for a minute or more my left hip goes crazy with pain and I can't hardly stand it. I can't stand long enough to brush my teeth or shave. I went to a chiropractor and hope to be getting some relief.

Sunday was a busy day with presidency meeting, visiting Moreland 5th ward for Quinn Dance's farewell, the rest of our meetings, YM/YW Correlation, and recommend interviews. Bishop Atkins gave me a list of people from his ward that are home bound that need house calls for their recommend interviews--I'll try to get them done this week.

Friday was a special day as I was able to go through the temple with Jacob, Rick and Terry, Howard and Edith, and Dad and Alva Lu. It was neat to see the love and respect that temple workers had for Dad and Alva Lu and how pleased they were to see them. It was also a privilege to be able to help Dad a little--he did remarkably well and didn't need much help, even with all the ups and downs.

Prior to the temple I picked SaraKay up at home after her final day at school and drop her off at Becky's. I held the new grandson and give him a little grandfatherly loving. That evening I had to be at a cabin in Island Park for a Powder Horn staff meeting. (One of my new responsibilities--a training for leaders to teach them what they need to know in administering a high adventure

program and helping Venturer's earn their Ranger award.) The next morning we went to Island Park Scout Camp to map out where everything was going to take place.

Each day at work I spend a little time going through my files and papers and boxing up endowment stuff to take to Idaho Falls and my stuff that I will need in Blackfoot. Dave Kirk, the fellow presently in the Blackfoot office leaves for camp this Wednesday and is going to try to be mostly moved out by then so I can start moving in. The place is such a mess, I really would like to bring in a carpet shampooer and also paint the walls.

Last Thursday night Sue and I were to speak at a Riverside ward's Relief Society, to their husbands and wives about communication in the family. We really had a hard time focusing on the subject but drove over together, forgetting that I had to leave early for another meeting—a great example of communication! I had to miss High Council meeting which had been postponed from Wednesday night because of Graduation. Then at 7:30 I had to be at the Court House for organizational meetings for the Bingham County central committee and for Legislative District 28 as well as selecting the delegates to go to Sun Valley for the state Republican convention next week. As a precinct committeeman, it is remarkable how much influence you can have on what goes on. I nominated Michael Duff to be the county chairman and he won. I also nominated Marla Polatis for Secretary and for State Committee Woman and she won. I won the Legislative District Chair spot by two votes and am glad another night of politics is over. I wish that Sue and I could go to the State Convention but my work responsibilities interfere.

Well, I had better close and get to bed. My eight-mile bike ride comes around plenty early. Sure love you all and pray constantly for your needs. We are especially pleased that all went well with Mike's operation today. We fasted with him and Sunday night seemed especially long without eating.

June 17, 2002

[Mom] I'm enjoying a quiet day at home today. The weather is blustery and that has given me an excuse to stay indoors and work on things here. It's always a relief to get through the weekend and have time to recuperate. One of the highlights of my week is the opportunity to teach my GD class. I truly love the members of my class and feel like

they come ready to be instructed. Our ward has some wonderful gospel scholars who add a lot of information and insights each week. As we have gotten into the stories and the ups and downs of ancient Israel, I have felt more of a kinship with them than I ever have before. I have also loved having a church job that requires me to study the scriptures. It's my favorite thing in the evening to sit on the couch and read the Old Testament and try to figure out what it's saying and how I can relate it to my life and challenges.

Several of you have asked about Mike. He has been on painkillers most of the week but he did get to some of his Friday classes and was able to attend his meetings yesterday. Shauntel and Randy have been so good to him and have driven him wherever he needed to go. His stick shift has been a bit of a challenge, but he drove yesterday and thought he would be able to manage on his own this week. He is on schedule to finish up his course work and if the doctor gives permission, he is hoping to drive home the week of July 2nd and live in Provo for the balance of the summer. We're so grateful that the surgery went well. The physical therapists were pleased with his progress and even surprised at how well he is doing.

We had a busy weekend. Daddy had a scout training all day Saturday. He was in charge of providing the meal for about 160 scouts and although everything was prepared, it still was a lot of chasing, carrying, and walking. I worried about him because he has been struggling with his back and part of last week, he could hardly stand in one spot for more than a few minutes. I know how much standing is required on some of these assignments and I didn't know how he would fair, but when I arrived home Saturday about five, he was mowing the lawn and in good spirits. He had managed to handle the day's demands and endure the discomfort. He has been going to a chiropractor last week to help him with his back and he is starting to see some improvement.

SaraKay and I arrived at Steve and Bonnie's Friday night and helped out a little. Bonnie's dad, Morris, was visiting and helping them with some landscaping. He is such a worker and finally, by the light of a desk lamp, he and Steve finished up their day's project about 11:30 p.m. and came in to go to bed. It's so nice to see their yard coming together so that the kids have lawn to enjoy and even a garden. Steve said the "Mormon cricket" problem has made it so difficult to get some things to survive but other things, including strawberries, seem immune to the infestation,

and so they have concentrated on those items until they get some relief from the crickets.

Saturday was moving day for Steph and Linds. Once SaraKay and I arrived and looked over the house, I could see that May and June had been "moving month" because everything in the house, in every cupboard, drawer, and closet was packed up and prepared to go. Their family had moved most of the items in boxes to the new house and had a lot of the kitchen already set up. The main things to be moved on Saturday were the big items like couches, beds and dressers. Paul and Jenny, Chris (Linds' brother from Salt Lake) and Steve lent a hand and Jenny and I helped clean baseboards and vacuum as the rooms were emptied. Bonnie and family joined us at noon to help with lunch so it was quite the family project.

The new home is only about five minutes away but nevertheless the chore of packing up is never easy. I kept thinking about how pleased the mission president's family was going to be when they arrived home July 1st from Japan and found their lovely home still lovely and well cared for. Steph and Linds and kids even planted the garden area.

Plans for their new home are progressing. They met with their builder on Friday and they will be breaking ground in about two weeks, with the assurance that they will be in by Thanksgiving. Many of the boxes packed will remain that way so that when their next move is made, they will already have a lot in boxes and won't have such a big job.

Several of you have asked about how Becky is doing. She has felt better and adjusted better with this baby than any she has had. Larsen is such a contented baby! He eats and sleeps and even at night he has pretty much kept a three-hour feeding schedule and allowed Becky and Chet to get a good night's rest. Tate and Maddie seem to be adjusting to the new arrival. Chet is awaiting word from the University of Indiana regarding admittance to their MBA program in the fall. It will be an Internet program but no distinction is made between the MBA executive program and the full-time students. It will make for a busy two years for him but he feels like with all the traveling he is doing, that he can spend a lot of the time on planes and in airports, working on assignments on his lap top.

Yesterday we had Grandpa and Grandma Larsen and Becky and Chet and family join us for a Father's Day dinner. It made for an enjoyable

afternoon. Alva Lu has been having some back problems and they weren't able to stay long but it was fun to have them in our home again and take a few minutes to honor Grandpa, Daddy, and Chet. Daddy grilled up some chicken on our new grill and we all enjoyed that!

[Dad] Softball has been the subject of last week and this week's family home evening. SaraKay is doing really well and her team has yet to lose a game. They played one of the best teams from Blackfoot tonight and rose to the challenge and ended up winning 19-5. Naturally, we have to visit Rupe's for an ice cream after each game.

Father's Day was really special. I appreciated so much those of you who called and remembered me that day. I also was particularly grateful for the wonderful Father's Day grill, even though it was a little unconventional how it all came out. It was nice to have it on hand to grill the chicken for the family that joined us for dinner that day. We borrowed the recipe for the marinade from Stephani--1 cup of oil, 1 cup of soy sauce, 1 cup of 7up, and a package of dry Italian dressing mix. We cut the boneless, skinless chicken breasts into two or three pieces, put it in the marinade for 18-24 hours and then grilled it up.

Saturday's training was what we call Blue Badge Training for all District committee members. It was a great training and I was responsible for registration as well as the lunch. We give the participants a three-ring binder and a nice golf shirt and I had to organize all of that and make sure we had printed name tags for every participant. About 2/3 preregistered and the IF secretary had those name tags printed up--we had to do the rest on-site.

I have still been getting my exercise in despite my aches and pains. It is so refreshing to make that 8-mile bike ride at 5:00 in the morning! It is a challenge to keep up with everything with my Church responsibilities, my old endowment responsibilities, and the incoming District Director responsibilities. But I am always happiest when I am busy. I have been doing some packing and sorting each day and am just about ready to move to Blackfoot.

Tomorrow I am going to a training in Ogden dealing with Back-to-School nights for recruiting more boys. It is late so I will bid you adieu and close and get this sent. Love, DAD

[Mom] Our weekend and involvement with both Janette's reception and Jacob's mission farewell

have left us a bit worn out but grateful for the opportunity to once again gather.

Let me give an update on the situation in Show Low. As most of you are aware, the fire that has consumed thousands of acres in Arizona, has for several days threatened the residents in the vicinity of Show Low where Scott and Jeanie live. The week prior to the fire, they left for a family vacation and drove to Denver for Janette's wedding on the 15th and then proceeded on to California to visit Miken and then Julianne. It was while they were at Julianne's that they received word of the fire and that the residents of Show Low had been told to prepare for possible evacuation. Jeremy, who lives at home and didn't accompany them on their trip, was their contact person, and he was told what items to gather and put in his car in case the need arose.

Of course, this has been on our minds and a prayer in our hearts these past days since receiving the news. Sunday morning about 7:15 Uncle Scott called and requested that we join them in fasting and prayer that day. He and Jeanie were headed home from California to stay with friends until the matter was resolved. Because Daddy was already gone to meetings, I made the phone calls and notified everyone. Gary and Linda were hosting Staff and Karen and Jim and family and we had Mark and Rita and Jessica here with us. After calling Gary, I informed Rick and Terry and Grandpa and Alva Lu. It was a sweet thing to join our prayers together that day. Although I have made several calls trying to get an update on their situation, as of yet I have been unsuccessful and we await word.

It was fun to host Mark and Rita for dinner Saturday night prior to the reception. They arrived at about four that afternoon with Jessica. Daddy played chef with his new Father's Day barbecue grill and our favorite chicken recipe from Steph. Jeff and his girlfriend, Marilyn, JoEllen and another friend, Muffin, also came and we had an enjoyable visit before everyone hurried off to get ready for the reception at 6:00. It was a lovely occasion.

After attending our meetings on Sunday morning, we left for Rick and Terry's. They invited the extended family to join them in singing a number for Jacob's farewell and that was a special treat. All of their family spoke and Rick sang a beautiful number. It was a wonderful meeting and especially nice to have such strong family support. Both Steph and Linds and Steve and Bonnie came and I know that meant a lot to the family. The

dinner afterward was scrumptious. Later that evening, when Daddy and I had a chance to reflect on the day, we couldn't help commenting about what a payday it was for Rick and Terry.

These past few weeks I have been worrying about getting Tim registered for his fall classes. He met with his advisor prior to leaving on his mission and outlined what classes he would need to take upon his return, so I kept that information in his file and pulled it out to figure out his upcoming schedule. Last week I tried a trial run as far as making sure that he was qualified to register and everything was in order. I printed out the classes that were posted on the BYU-I website and discovered that his statistics class had only one section left with any available seats. Originally there were six or seven sections and I wondered if on Saturday and Sunday the last section would be filled. I called the head of the Math department and discussed the situation with her and she acknowledged that she had been watching the situation and knew that she needed to add at least an additional section to meet the demand. I called again Friday afternoon and she told me that she had arranged for another class and she gave me the info on it so that I could move ahead and work Tim's other classes around it.

Tim was qualified to get into the system at midnight Sunday so SaraKay and I waited up but when it was time, I was unable to access the system and get him registered. I continued to try and finally gave up and went to bed about 12:30. As I climbed into bed, Daddy roused and asked if I had gotten him registered and I told him no. I fell asleep and figured I would try again at five when Daddy went for his bike ride. At 6:15 I got up and Daddy was already connected to the web site but he couldn't get it to work either. Unbeknownst to me, he had awakened several times in the night and continued trying. I realized that I wasn't the only one stressed about getting this done.

Finally, after a few more unsuccessful tries we decided to try the phone registration. We immediately got through and had him registered within a few minutes. We couldn't believe it! Today I received the official schedule in the mail, confirming his classes. What a relief!

Shauntel called a few minutes ago to let me know that Mike had cleaned her teeth today and she thought that he had done a great job! She has had a busy week. Last week she had Lasik surgery on her eyes. She went in for an 11:00 a.m. surgery but didn't actually get in until three. She said that

she was awake for the entire surgery and that it was a little unnerving to realize that they were cutting her eyeball and peeling back the skin! She was able to go home that evening and Randy played Mr. Mom. She now has 20/20 vision and for the first time since third grade, she is free of contacts or glasses!

SaraKay and I helped Daddy move into the Blackfoot office today. It was quite a task to load up all his furniture from the Pocatello office, tie it onto Grandpa Larsen's pickup, and then transport it to Blackfoot. Part way, we lost some wall hangings on the freeway, but fortunately the pictures weren't ruined, just the frames and glass. It was pretty stressful and I was grateful when the last of it was unloaded and nothing was ruined. I marvel at Daddy's stamina in situations like that which require so much lifting. I'm hoping that he won't suffer any ill effects from the day's activities.

[Dad] Last night for FHE SaraKay taught the lesson which was her final requirement for the Celestial Challenge so she can go with the youth this Friday. She finished reading the Book of Mormon last week and we are proud of her faithfulness. After the lesson last night, we went in to Blackfoot for another softball game and traditional stop at Rupe's for ice cream.

Sunday was a full day with Presidency Meeting, sacrament meeting and Sunday school, and then leaving for Pocatello for Jacob's farewell. It was rewarding to be a part of the family choir that sang a special number for the meeting. Mindy commented to Steph that they haven't sung together since Chambers. Ryan and Jeff were singing by me and did a fine job. I told Ryan he had a nice voice, not quite as good as his sisters, but he really did well. I was so impressed with Jonathon's talk. It set the tone for the rest of the family. Terry's talk could have been an EFY talk. It was such a joy to be a part of the day's events and feel of the spirit. It hardly seems possible that Jonathon is twelve and was ordained that day also.

The food and visiting at Hunt's afterward was delicious: the Catalina chicken, ham, and all the wonderful salads and desserts. I couldn't quit eating until we left. It was also special to take pictures with Dad and all five sons and Karen. Our thoughts and prayers were with Jeanie in Show Low, realizing they were evacuating and leaving behind their home and most of their belongings.

Signing recommends that evening was interesting as three people came through that I had

interviewed over 20 years ago as their bishop in the Moreland 2nd ward. I was so tired afterward that I just collapsed on the bed and took a nap before I could get up and go to bed.

[Mom] Last Wednesday when I returned from one of SaraKay's ball games, there was a message on the answering machine that Grandpa Richards had fallen and broken his hip. I called Grandma and she filled me in on the details. Grandpa was standing by his bed in the rest home and tried to turn around to get something off of his table and stumbled and fell. After x-rays were taken, it was discovered that it was the femur and not the hip that was broken. Although it was a bad spiral break, Grandpa didn't seem to be having too much pain. After testing to check for any aortic blockage, he went in for surgery at about four o'clock the next day. On Saturday he seemed to be doing well but last night when I called Grandma, he had started hallucinating from the medication given during the surgery and had been pretty "wired" for most of the day. Kathy requested some sleeping pills to help him get some rest. Hopefully today he'll settle down. It has been a long vigil for Kathy and Grandma. Lisa and Don arrived Friday from Arizona enroute to Washington for a Bricker reunion so they spent some time at the hospital with him too. Remember him in your prayers.

Last night Daddy and I couldn't quit visiting about the Nauvoo Temple dedicatory sessions. What a blessing to live in a day and age when the historic events of the church can be broadcast throughout the world. Thursday night Daddy and I attended the first session and then last night I took SaraKay to the last one. Both sessions were a spiritual feast. I was amazed at how many of those who spoke could trace their ancestry back to Nauvoo.

Ever since I heard Pres. Hinckley announce the Nauvoo Temple, I have felt that many of the early saints would be permitted to attend the sessions and that it would be a time of rejoicing on both sides of the veil. It was a poignant moment when President Hinckley testified that he knew that the Father and the Son, as well as Joseph and Hyrum were present for the proceedings. Having the Tabernacle Choir there for all 13 sessions was wonderful. Of course, Pres. Hinckley's remarks were my favorite. He is a magnificent prophet! It has been especially sweet to know that Randy and Shauntel and Mike have been participants and will have those memories for a lifetime.

As a part of the services yesterday, it was mentioned that the Tabernacle Choir had performed a concert in Quincy, Illinois and given the proceeds (\$75,000) to the town in appreciation for their kindness to the saints so many years ago. It has given me cause to reflect on the words of the song, "Thy deeds shall thy memorial be, fear not thou didst them unto me."

We received word that Show Low, for the most part, was spared from the fire that has been raging in northern Arizona for the last few weeks. It was reported that as the fire approached the Show Low area the flames were 150 feet high and the heat made it almost impossible to combat. Fortunately, weather conditions changed and the flames subsided and the firefighters were able to get into the area and do what was needed. The fire is still only about one-third contained but it has skirted Show Low and the danger for them is past. What a blessing and answer to many prayers. Scott and Jeanie are returning home today.

Another answer to prayer came Saturday when Mike called and informed us that he had just received word that he had passed his first year of dental school, even getting a passing grade in the one class that he had thought he would have to retake. Halleluiah! He is heading home this week, planning on being in Provo for the Fourth! Happy days are here again!

SaraKay's baseball team won their tournament last week. She thoroughly enjoyed her experience with the team and she gained some confidence in her playing that will enable her to be more at ease with other opportunities.

Daddy and I were a part of a double mixed quartet that performed "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" yesterday in four wards. I had not wanted to do it because I am uncomfortable with performing and leaving the meeting early but when all was said and done, I think that it was very well received by the ward members.

Our garden is growing leaps and bounds. Sara Kay and I spend a few hours a week weeding and then Daddy finishes up with the rototiller. I feel such gratitude for "the good earth" and the miracle of putting a seed in the ground and having it bring forth a hundred-fold! I recall one garden we had out on the desert that was overrun with weeds and nearly a lost cause. One day I returned home from town to find that two of our Mexicans had spent an hour hoeing, removing every single weed. I'll never forget their kindness!

A few weeks ago, when I was visiting with my Dad on the phone, he commented that he wished he could come visit me and see how my garden was doing. I recalled many times when he and Grandma would visit us and he would walk out through the yard and garden with me, giving me suggestions and ideas to help improve it. When he and Grandma first moved into their condo in Salt Lake, I remember thinking that the only thing it lacked was a little plot of ground or window box for Grandpa to grow something in. I so appreciate how he has encouraged me over the years. It's become a source of satisfaction and enjoyment now that I have more time to give it.

It has pleased me that so many of you are gardening and teaching your children to value those skills. David and Andrea are doing box gardening in their back yard. They have constructed areas enclosed in railroad ties and Laurel and Angela are each in charge of their own area. Jeff and Jonie are masters at home production including harvesting syrup, rice, and wild game. Steve and Bonnie fight the grasshoppers for everything they get from their garden but they've persisted! Steph and Linds are planning their landscaping for their new home to include a garden, raspberry patch, and fruit trees. I know Laurel's folks raise a wonderful garden. That summer they spent in Cincinnati they sent us a picture of Emma standing in the garden with her Grandma McCallister, nearly hidden by the lush foliage. As far as I know, every one of you are doing something to develop your "green thumb" and you'll be grateful you did.

[Dad] I tried for a month to read "John Adams" and just didn't have enough time to get very far. So last week when I saw the book on tape, I checked it out and have been listening to it as I have driven to and from work. What a great man! I was so impressed with his relationship with his wife Abigail and what a great and accomplished woman she was also. He was so convinced of the divine providence moving in the affairs of men to bring about the United States. From a humble beginning on a small New England farm, a thirst for knowledge, training as an attorney, a vision of independence, careful negotiations, integrity in everything he did, and so on—he rose to the highest office in this country and raised up a son also qualified and elected president.

I was impressed with how little things have changed as far as political intrigue, campaigns, a vitriolic press, and the driving role of personal ambition in the lives of many while others quietly

work on in the best interests of the country as they genuinely see them. Thomas Jefferson was his vice president and they had been ambassadors together to France and developed a great friendship despite the vast difference in roots and background.

However, they were from opposing political parties and were driven apart by party politics and Jefferson's own political ambitions. Later in their lives, because of Adam's magnanimity, their differences were put behind them and they renewed their friendship through regular correspondence. It is interesting to me that they were two of the last signers of the Declaration of independence to die and that they both died on July 4th, about 5 hours apart, on the 50th anniversary of the signing. At the time Adams died, there was a terrific clap of thunder and then the sun shined through the clouds illuminating Braintree with such a brightness that it was felt that it was a divine affirmation of the greatness of John Adams and his life.

Nauvoo has been a focal point of our lives for the last little while coming to a climax with the dedication of the temple this past week. What a rich outpouring of the spirit and tender feelings expressed by those who took part in that sacred event. We are so blessed to live in a time when such events can be shared with the church around the globe. I am touched as I think of saints queueing up in Japan and Korea and Taiwan to view those proceedings at an unlikely hour. The glint of tears on choir members and speakers and the open emotion of Pres. Hinckley all attest to the power of the spirit and the heart connection with our pioneer forefathers who sacrificed so much. What a powerful living monument to them is the Nauvoo Temple. Those memories will be refreshed and sanctified with every ordinance performed in that temple for the living or the dead.

Preparations continue for our Stake Encampment. Robert Wahlquist from the ISU Institute will be our speaker. We will be camping by wards on the Snake River High School and Jr. High football fields and have the special program on Friday night in the stadium and then a myriad of activities the following day. Any of you are welcome to join us if you want--July 12th and 13th.

Last week I borrowed Dad's pickup to haul my office furniture from Pocatello to Blackfoot. I am trying to get the office cleaned and painted and to

shampoo the carpets and get moved in and settled. I have already gotten into the work with trying to find unregistered boys and get them registered and pulling in more Friends of Scouting dollars to meet the District goals.

We were so pleased to finally get some letters from Tim. It is hard to believe that we are down to the last six weeks and we are so excited to get him home and have the family gather in August.

July 10, 2002

[Mom] On Tuesday Daddy asked if I would be willing to help him clean and paint his new office at the Blackfoot store. We started about 8:30 a.m. and finished up about 3:30. His predecessor, Dave Kirk, was at Little Lemhi Scout Camp and hadn't removed his paraphernalia before he left for camp so Daddy carefully moved everything out for him and stacked it in a corner of the conference room. That left the area free for us to clean and get ready.

It was a big job, but all our experience in fixing up and painting came in handy and we stuck with it until we were through. It looked so nice with the walls freshly painted and the big window and blinds all cleaned up! On Wednesday evening SaraKay and I helped him move in his desk and credenza, bookshelves and chairs. He was going to finish things up today.

As we worked on Tuesday, people that came into the store would sneak a peek to see what was going on and would comment on how nice it looked. I think Daddy can be proud of his office now and feel like it's a positive reflection of his personal style. He met this morning with his boss and they outlined what his "critical achievements" will be for the upcoming year. I think he is enjoying the change of pace and the challenges ahead.

Tuesday night about 11:30 the phone rang and I roused to answer it. It was Mike. He was en route from Iowa, driving alone and had been listening to four years' worth of general conference tapes to keep him interested and awake. He said that he was about 100 miles from Evanston, Wyoming and that he was wide awake and thought that he would keep driving until he got to Provo, instead of stopping to sleep. I told him to be careful and then I went back to bed, but not to sleep. I laid awake, worrying that he would doze off or that some thugs would see him traveling alone on those deserted Wyoming highways and that he would never make it to Provo in one piece.

He was supposed to call me upon arrival and I wasn't sure just how long it would take him but on Wednesday about noon he called to say that he had arrived that morning about 3 a.m. and realized that he didn't have anywhere to go since he didn't remember the apartment number of his good friend, Coop. Anyway, he decided to make good use of his time and he did some shopping for groceries, gassed up his car, and then parked up by the temple and slept on the grass until he could check on Coop's situation. He planned to attend Rachel's baptism but was going to return to Provo to try to meet some friends for the weekend and get acquainted.

For the Fourth we went to the movie "Star Wars" and then met Becky and Chet at the Shilo for the annual fireworks display. They bought us supper and we took care of the kids while they did their thing, mixing and mingling with the Melaleuca guests. It is such a festive occasion and fun for us to be a part of. Chet had a room with a balcony that overlooked the festivities and was close to the orchestra that provides music at the water's edge for a couple of hours prior to the fireworks. There were thousands of spectators lining the riverbanks, attending the dinner, or just strolling around the greenbelt. It was so thrilling to hear the beautiful patriotic music that was performed.

When I asked Shauntel about their Fourth, she commented that they attended a firework display with four other couples who they have been friends with over the years in medical school. They realized that next year they would all be gone from the area. She said that it made her a little nostalgic to think about the changes that are coming for them. On July 1st of next year Randy will start his new training in Missouri and after 10 years of schooling and residency, they will say good-bye to Coralville.

Shauntel commented how much Camille enjoyed the display. Part way through some of the fireworks Camille exclaimed, "When I see the big ones, it reminds me of the Fourth of July!" When Shauntel and Mike went to the cornerstone ceremony in Nauvoo, she told Camille that they would get to see President Hinckley. To that she remarked, "You mean President Hinckley is true!" I hope Shauntel is recording some of these sweet moments because all too soon the years pass and they may be forgotten.

On Saturday we attended Rachel's baptism in Wellsville. She wore a beautiful white dress and sang a solo on the program before the baptism.

She sounded so sweet (she has inherited Bonnie's beautiful voice) Following her number and a talk on baptism, all her guests went to the font area for the baptism. Most of Bonnie's family were there and we had Dad, SaraKay, and me, Steph and Linds and family, Paul and Jenny and family, and Mike from our side. Following the confirmation, we gathered at Steve and Bonnie's for a delicious meal. We always enjoy the chance to socialize with the Bensons, including Bonnie's Uncle Vaughn and his wife, Cecelia and some of their bunch.

Later that afternoon SaraKay went to Steph's to spend the night. She had a great time exploring the wooded hill behind their home and Steph took them to a movie. Daddy and I came on home with Paul and Jenny close behind. They had been planning to spend a weekend or two here this summer with us before leaving for school and the events of the weekend with Rachel and Larsen presented a good time for them to come. We were so pleased to get to have some time with Beth. She is such a pleasant baby! They spent the night here and joined Becky and Chet the next day for Larsen's blessing.

Most of Chet's family was there from Utah as well as Steph and Linds and family, Steve with Chrissy and Jared, Paul and Jenny, and us. Chet gave a beautiful blessing and later bore a sweet testimony of the importance of relationships and family. We thoroughly enjoyed the chance to mingle over a delicious barbeque with Chet's folks and siblings. Since we had last been together, Chet's sister, Tiffany has had a cute baby boy and in April his brother, Jake, returned from serving in the New York, Ithaca Mission. They are all such sweet people and it's fun to have these occasions when we get together and renew acquaintances. I know that Becky and Chet were both pretty worn out by the time the day was over.

[Dad] Sue covered the events of the last week. From my vantage point I don't have a lot to add. Church-wise we are busy with reorganizing another ward on Sunday and making some changes on the high council. In the coming weeks we will be heavily involved in training the high council to accomplish the vision of greater responsibility and relieve some of the pressure on the bishops that I have described in previous letters. There are always interviews to be conducted and plenty of demands on one's time. I have felt a greater need to step back and meditate and feel the direction of the Spirit in directing my thoughts and actions. Perhaps

listening to tapes during my travel time is self-defeating for that greater purpose. But I have so enjoyed being able to have the new insights and knowledge gained from such tapes as the "Prelude to Glory" series and "John Adams."

It is a relief to have the office move made and to be settling in to my new responsibilities. I realize I still have a lot to learn to be able to feel comfortable and on top of things. With great people to work with, I feel that the greatest responsibility I have is to provide the vision and to recognize the people that we need to be moving forward to be prepared at the appropriate times to assume the responsibilities of leadership in each aspect of the work—membership, money, and support services.

July 16, 2002

[Mom] Yesterday was a special day for SaraKay. She was presented in sacrament meeting since she is graduating from Primary. When the Bishop called her to come up to receive her certificate, he commented that he had taken her and his daughter, Corina, to the Groveland Rapids last week and that she was fearless. He hoped that the Beehive Class was ready to take her on! When she returned on Wednesday from the outing, she told me that she had had the time of her life and that while some of the girls hung back, she jumped right in and enjoyed every minute!

These last few days have been the hottest that I remember. The heat wave started on Thursday and it's been in the 100's until today. Friday was the stake "Zion's Camp" activity. The entire stake was invited to gather at designated locations on the high school and junior high football fields and enjoy dinner with their ward, attend a stake fireside, camp the night, and then spend part of Saturday competing in games. The event has been on the calendar for several months and since Daddy is over the Activities Committee of the stake, we had planned to attend. Besides that, SaraKay wouldn't have let us not attend!

Anyway, with the temperatures in the 100's on Friday, we worried about people in the stake not supporting the activity. I think that it definitely had an impact on the numbers, but there was still a good turn-out and we had an enjoyable time. One drawback of the location was that there was no shade and so a lot of the ward members brought big umbrellas to provide some.

That night there were very few from our ward that stayed overnight, but we pitched our tent and also

kept an eye on two of SaraKay's friends whose parents gave them permission to stay the night. During the dinner hour, Daddy walked around the area, visiting and mingling with the different wards. It proved to be too much for his back and by the time we went to bed, he was in quite a bit of pain. I tried to get him to come home and sleep here and then return the next day for the other activities, but he toughed it out. He is still paying the price. It has been very discouraging for him to be trying to exercise regularly and do all of the therapy that the doctor has prescribed and still feel like he can't build up his stamina.

Saturday after returning from the activity, Daddy installed a used swamp cooler that he got from the Tiger Ear booth. The fair board has remodeled the area under the grandstands and the swamp coolers couldn't be used in the new facility so Daddy bought one for us and is using one for the Blackfoot scout office. We are enjoying the cool air despite the fact that there is a slight smell of Tiger Ear when you first enter the house. We have been able to get some respite from the heat by going downstairs, but most of our work is done upstairs and so it has been nice to get the west end of the house cooled off a little.

Last night, after Daddy finished signing recommends, we visited Grandpa and Alva Lu. They were leaving today for Island Park for the week. Several of Alva Lu's siblings spend part of the summer camping there and it is fun for them to be there with them. Their fifth wheeler is parked in a campground for the summer months and this makes it very convenient. We enjoyed our visit, but whenever we spend time with our fathers, we can't help but feel disheartened at seeing them struggling with the problems of aging. I have to remind myself that they are both in their 80's and have lived productive, righteous lives, but never-the-less, it is hard to see them losing the vitality that has characterized their whole lives.

We also stopped in Sunday evening to see Becky and Chet and had a leisurely visit outside in their back yard. They have recently put their home on the market and been involved in doing all those little projects that need to be done before "showing" a home. They have been house hunting but as yet haven't found anything they are particularly taken with. We enjoyed the chance to cuddle Larsen. He is such a cute baby!

SaraKay and I picked a big mess of peas this morning and we are trying to get them podded and frozen.

[Dad] We got some yard work done and the yard sure looks nice. It's hard to keep everything green with this heat. For FHE we had a short lesson reviewing the four points shared with us by Brother Robert Wahlquist, the speaker at our stake encampment. He talked about the signs of the times and the Second Coming and gave us these four points that would guarantee our preparation no matter when it actually comes and would also help us to not fear as the prophesied events occur. First, he said we should "Stand in Holy Places." We talked about our home, the temple, the Church, and wherever we are if we surround ourselves with a blanket of pure thoughts and intentions. Second, he said to "follow the prophet with exactness." We talked about rationalizing and "almostness" with the Word of Wisdom, tithing, and other things. Third, he said we should "honor the priesthood." We talked about honoring the priesthood through getting and respecting patriarchal blessings, asking for priesthood blessings when sick or in need, and following the council of our local leaders. His final point was, "never waiver." How important it is that we are consistent—that the Lord knows he can count on us.

We reorganized the Riverside 1st Ward on Sunday releasing Bishop Steve Fullmer and his councilors Keith Esplin and Randy Ruger. The ward sustained Randy Ruger as their new bishop with Ron Ellis and Keith Walker as councilors. We are also in the process of a few changes on the high council which will take place next Sunday. It is always exciting to be involved in these changes, especially the interviews and feeling the commitment of the saints to do whatever they are called to do.

With regard to the stake encampment—the last one was when I was at camp and Sue and Sara Kay and a friend were carried away in a microburst and left hanging in the tent from the top of a chain link fence. So that one was referred to as "The Blowout" and this one was called "The Broilout" or "The Cookout."

The swamp coolers in the office and the dining room have really helped to make the heat bearable. The heat has also given our garden a boost. The peas, zucchini, and onions have been wonderful. We have a lot of people comment on

our garden because it is so visible as they drive by.

Let me just conclude with a couple of thoughts from John Adams. With regard to our Fourth of July celebrations he said in a letter to Abigail in 1776, *"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding generations, as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shews, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this Continent to the other from this time forward forever more."*

He also prayed, *"I Pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessing on THIS HOUSE, and on All that shall hereafter Inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof!"* President Franklin D. Roosevelt had this lettered in gold in the marble over the fireplace in the State Dining Room in the White House.

July 23, 2002

[Mom] One of the nice things about life is that it is full of surprises. For me, those surprises usually come in the form of a phone call from one of you kids. That is what happened last Tuesday when I got a call from Shauntel. She called and started by saying something like, "Well, we've had a bite on our file." For a minute I couldn't figure out what she was talking about and then it dawned on me, and she proceeded to tell me that they had been selected to be the adoptive parents to a baby that was being born mid-September in Minneapolis. They had gone the previous week to Minneapolis to meet the birth mother and grandmother. They didn't let any of the family know because they wanted to assess the situation before making an announcement and getting all of us excited.

Following the meeting, they felt like there was a strong possibility that the adoption would go through and so they let the word out. Needless to say, it was wonderful news! Now the waiting begins. The baby, a little boy, is due September 21st and if all goes according to schedule, they will be making the trip to Minneapolis to get him a few days later. The timing is perfect for us since we are hoping to make a trip to the Midwest during spud harvest and if the baby comes as scheduled, we might be able to be present for the blessing. We are also hoping to make it to Michigan and participate in John and Laurel's new baby's blessing. I'm sure that Shauntel and Randy

would appreciate your faith and prayers these next few months.

Speaking of prayers; Steph and Linds have been hunting for a rental in the Hyde Park area since finding out that the home they are presently renting has been sold. They located one but the owner thought that he had just sold it and didn't need renters. They have continued to follow up on every lead and feeling the pressure of needing to find a place since the new owners would be moving in the last part of August.

Steph called yesterday and let us know that the prospective buyer of the Hyde Park home cancelled and the owner called and asked them if they would like to rent it until their new home is completed. The rental is located about a block from their building site and so it would be in their new ward, in their new school district, and so convenient for them. They were going to visit with the owner last night and assess the situation, but they are hoping that this will work for them and make their lives a lot simpler these next few months. What a relief!

The weeks are rushing by and August is all but here. Someone asked me the other day if it seems like the time is dragging now that we are on the final weeks of Tim's mission. We have been so busy that time is flying by and there aren't enough hours in the day for all our intended projects.

Steph and kids spent a couple days with us last week and she helped me organize the reunion weekend. I am going to write each family member a personal letter, outlining the plans and assignments. I will need each of you to let me know exactly when you will be arriving, and what you are doing in regards to camp afterwards. I will include this info on the letter and hope that each of you will finalize your plans and let me know.

SaraKay left this morning for Girl's Camp. She has been so excited that the last few days she has about driven me crazy. Yesterday she was bouncing off the walls and so I tried to work her to help the time pass. We canned apricots, weeded the garden, repacked, checked and marked all her supplies, and went shopping for all those last-minute items that were needed. She was so excited that she couldn't get to sleep last night and I know she is going to arrive at Pasa La Coma a bit weary from all the anticipation. Daddy will be going up for a couple days and will be leaving tomorrow and that has put my mind to rest a little regarding her. I know that the first year can be

stressful but hopefully she will "roll with the punches."

Our visit with Steph was so fun. She brought ingredients for her famous pies and we thoroughly enjoyed helping her dispose of them. Becky and kids came on Wednesday and we all went swimming at the gravel pits. We had several inner tubes and small rubber rafts and life jackets, but the pond was shallow enough that there wasn't much to worry about. Maddie and Tate had their "floaties" and Becky went in with them. Mike was here for a couple of days and he and Steph and I just sat on the banks and visited while the kids played for a couple of hours. Although there were a lot of kids playing in the other ponds adjacent to the one we were occupying, we had our pond all to ourselves for most of the afternoon and it made for a very relaxed and fun time.

It was enjoyable to have Mike around for a couple of days, too. He took the kids lizard hunting Thursday morning, but there were none to be found so they returned to the pond and caught frogs. He challenged them to catch 100 frogs before they were through and they did it. When we had been there the day before, the frogs (smaller than a stink bug) were everywhere and they would sit on your hand or in finger for a long time if you caught one. Following the activity, they freed them and came home to play games.

I was involved most of Thursday in helping with the Clifford Wray funeral. I have long known and admired his family and it was nice to be involved with them in the funeral.

Saturday Daddy and I went to Camp Little Lemhi for the annual dinner for members of the Executive Board. Kim had requested that Daddy play the trumpet as a part of the "retrieving the colors" flag ceremony. We left here about three and thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful, scenic drive up through Swan Valley and on to Palisades Lake. Every time I make that trip, I am awed by the beautiful scenery. Maybe if I make it to heaven the Lord will let me have a spacious log cabin in the pines on a river or lake.

It was a treat to visit with so many good friends at the scout dinner. We even were able to see Ron and Kathy Hart, old friends from our Ricks College days. Ron was the student body president the year that I served on the student council. Daddy has a cousin, Paul Elswood, who also serves on the scout exec council and he and his wife, Gloria, were also there and we renewed acquaintances with them. It was a very satisfying evening for us.

[Dad] For FHE last night we cleaned up the weeds in the garden and tilled it and gleaned the last of the peas and threw the vines across to the cows. Then we set up the "Cache Cooker" outside and finished off the apricots while we had a lesson out back in the swing. It was a beautiful evening.

We have been following up on a challenge by Bishop Jenks to read the Book of Mormon as a family between now and the end of the year by reading at least three pages a day together. While Steph and kids were here, we did our reading together and it was most satisfying to an old Grandpa to hear his grandkids reading the scriptures together. This morning I was the Stake presidency representative to give the girls an inspirational message and prayer and send them off at 7:00. They are a wonderful bunch of girls and I think SK will have a wonderful time at camp-although she has been disappointed that they weren't going to Island Park Scout Camp again this year.

Sunday started with presidency meeting and then I ended up going to three different sacrament meetings to release three high councilors and sustain their replacements. Released were Dwight Gardner, Mike Larsen, and Bill Martin. Sustained were Michael Blight, Kesi Hunter, and Steve Fulmer. I sang in the choir in our ward for a wonderful arrangement of "Come, Come Ye Saints" before I hurried off to Moreland 3rd Ward at 10:00. They were commemorating Pioneer Day by meeting in the grove of trees in front of Berkley Wray's home. It was a sweet experience and choice testimonies of the pioneers given by Michele Talbot, Barbara Ellis, and Kent Hansen. Their ward has been doing this for about fifteen years. Kent said he usually rides his horse to this meeting but that he was so nervous that morning that his horse wouldn't let him near.

This last week I have been busy with Tiger Ear remodel decisions, helping with Wood Badge preparations and purchases, ordering Tiger Ear aprons from a new supplier, ordering shirts for Powder Horn, and raising money and setting my critical's and membership goals for the balance of the year. The Blackfoot office has been a little more bearable with the swamp cooler in there, but it is still pretty hot and miserable by the end of the afternoon.

I used the council pickup last Thursday and borrowed a trailer from Riverside Boot & Saddle and hauled patrol boxes, cookers, and propane bottles down from Treasure Mountain Scout Camp

that were left up there by mistake after Cedar Badge. Dan Marley helped me and we had a good meeting at Treasure Mountain with Dave Palmer (whose wife was a roommate of Karen's at Ricks) who is the other fellow I am supervising now. We hauled the materials to Scout Hollow, just north of Rigby, and then hauled the propane bottles to Home Depot to exchange for new ones because of the regulations regarding filling bottles with the old valves.

Monday I helped the women who were buying the food for girls camp (we cook and feed as a stake) and helped load it into a semi reefer and paid for about \$1,000 worth of food at Sam's Club. It is a good thing that my back has straightened up lately and I am able to handle these rigorous physical demands. Tomorrow night I am going to girl's camp, have a speaking part on the program, and play I Am A Child of God on my trumpet for part of the conclusion. It is nice to have a small talent that I can use and have been called upon quite a bit over the last few years.

Sue mentioned Little Lemhi and it was a thrill to be there last Saturday. I don't think I have ever seen it looking prettier. When we left the camp, we took the road along the river that finally connects to the main highway just past Falls Campground. We have been to that campground for a few Fathers and Sons outings. It was a breathtaking ride along the river. There had been a heavy storm on Thursday and everything looked so lush and green.

July 30, 2002

[Mom] Daddy left Sunday for the Salmon River High Adventure Base to help out there for a week while the regular director is gone. He has called every day and visited about the problems they are having including a generator that isn't functioning properly. Thank goodness Daddy has a lot of savvy when it comes to fixing things.

SaraKay and I have tried to carry on with yard work, watering, weeding the garden, and other things. This morning we went out to weed and found a wheelbarrow full of zucchini, ripe and ready, to be picked. I have fixed zucchini almost every night for supper, fried up in a little butter with onions and tomatoes, but one large zucchini goes a long way! This morning I felt frustrated with the prospect of trying to find someone who might enjoy our excess produce when the idea came to me to put them out on the front lawn and advertise, "Free Zucchini". SaraKay made a sign and we got a cooler and loaded it and then put the

rest on the ground beside the cooler. We were in the garden weeding the corn and pretty much out of sight when the first car stopped and a lady took some. We were both elated!

Earlier, before anyone came, SaraKay commented that people were probably going to think that we were nuts. I agreed. But, I am happy to report that tonight the zucchini is gone and hopefully some people are enjoying it as much as we have.

A few minutes ago, I looked out and could see an older couple in an old and shabby car stop and take some. It did my heart good! I can't wait to tell SaraKay when she gets home from YW that our venture was successful.

We had a wonderful weekend hosting Paul and Jenny for a short visit. They called on Friday and said that they would be returning from a Johnson reunion at Sun Valley Saturday afternoon and wondered if they could spend the night and attend our meetings with us on Sunday. We were delighted! Beth is growing leaps and bounds and it was nice to have some time to visit. It doesn't seem possible that in less than a month they will be in Wisconsin. They couldn't have timed their visit any better. SaraKay was home from girl's camp and Daddy even had a free evening.

This past week while Alva Lu attended her family reunion in the Tri-Cities area, Rick and Terry and Dad and I were able to work it out so that we had someone there with Grandpa. He is pretty independent but it was nice to be able to help with meals and clean-up. It was a special experience for me to be with him. I love him so much and value his counsel, help, and friendship over the years.

Recently he has taken several bad falls and so he uses his walker all the time. I didn't want him to fall while I was on duty so I had a tendency to "hover" every time he got up to go somewhere. I was touched when he ask me to kneel with him at his bedside for prayers before he retired for the night. I don't know if I will ever stop learning from my two sets of parents. Their example is a constant guiding light!

SaraKay had the time of her life at Girl's Camp. She thoroughly enjoyed everything about it and spent quite a while writing in her journal about her experiences. She has a lot of good friends in the ward and fits in. Last Sunday she was called to be the organist for the YW and she seemed pleased with that. Tonight they had a stake co-ed baseball activity with some crazy rules that sounded like a

real riot to me. It will be fun to get her report when she gets home. She is excited for school to start, but more excited for the upcoming time with family following Tim's return!

Daddy spent two days with the stake at Camp and had several opportunities to play his trumpet. The sound of the trumpet in the mountains is absolutely breathtaking! It is amazing how many times he gets to use his talent. I know it pleases him.

He is certainly loved and respected in the stake. One of the assignments he enjoys the most is visiting and interviewing the homebound and those in rest homes. He did three such interviews a week ago last Sunday afternoon and said how touching it is that these people who are not able to attend the temple, still feel a need to keep their recommends current.

It was an interesting experience for me to have both Dad and SaraKay gone for a couple days. One of those days I spent with Grandpa Larsen but the other one I was just here at home knocking around. I couldn't help thinking how different our lives would be if SaraKay hadn't come along. But then, so would it be different if each one of you weren't a part of our lives. I was reading in Ann Landers about a study they did, asking parents if they would have children if they could go back and start their married lives over again. It was amazing that 70% said no, that they would not have children, that it was just too difficult and disappointing! Wow! I'm so glad for the gospel perspective and the helpful counsel we receive if we listen to our leaders and put our lives in order.

I'm leaving tomorrow for Utah to spend a day with my folks. Becky has hired SaraKay to be her nanny while she attends the annual Melaleuca convention in S.L.C. and I am tagging along for part of the trip. It is an answer to prayer for me since my car has not been up to making that trip and Daddy hasn't had a break in his responsibilities so that he could loan me his for a couple days.

August 12, 2002

[Mom] First let me just say how grateful that I am for the gift of the Spirit in my life. When all was said and done, I felt like the Spirit prompted me to get to Salt Lake to see my Dad one last time before he died. I am so grateful for that.

At the time Grandpa had his accident, Deniece and Lisa and their families were both in the Salt

Lake area for vacations and I felt that there was plenty of support for Grandma so I decided to wait to make my visit.

Later, when most of her company was gone, I visited with Grandma and she said that she felt like Grandpa was strengthening and she said that she would alert me if he took a turn for the worse. I worried about getting to Utah to see him but I knew that I would have to take Daddy's car and he has had such a harried summer that I just didn't see how I could. The weeks passed and I continued to call Mom and check on Daddy's progress.

Then two weeks ago as SaraKay, Becky, and I were working out the details of the Melaleuca Convention in Salt Lake and SaraKay's accompanying Becky to help with the children in the hotel, it dawned on me that maybe we could work something out so that I could tag along and visit my Dad. Things worked out for me to do that. I notified some of the Salt Lake bunch that I was coming and we organized a picnic with Grandpa at the rest home. Mike, Shauntel, Camille, Jenny, Paul, Beth, Becky and her three and SaraKay and I all planned to attend.

The night before we left for Salt Lake, I received a call from Grandma informing me that she was sick and wouldn't be able to meet us at the rest home. She had been so sick that she hadn't been to the rest home to see Grandpa for two days. She said that Kathy had been going each day to help Grandpa with his meals.

Well, despite the situation, I felt like I should go. Thursday morning, we arrived about 10. Mike was already there, sitting by the bed, holding Grandpa's hand. One of the nurses suggested we each take just a few minutes with him alone. We had our picnic on the lawn and took turns going in for short visits. He didn't say much but we were all grateful for the chance to express our love to him.

By about noon most of the family left and I helped him with lunch. He was pretty weak and ate only a small amount of watermelon. I left shortly thereafter and went to Mother's for a brief visit and then headed home.

On Friday our company from Alabama arrived and we left for West Yellowstone and the Playmill shortly after Daddy arrived home from his week at the Salmon High Adventure Base. I had been worried about entertaining our guests (an old classmate of Daddy's and his wife) since I didn't really know either of them. I traveled with Shirley

and Daddy and Leonard traveled together. They were spending the night in Yellowstone and so we needed two cars. We ended up taking Becky and Chet's Rodeo that I brought home from SL the night before since the transmission in our Buick went out on the way back from Salmon River. We had a nice time with the Hart's and enjoyed the festive time at the Playmill.

We arrived home about midnight and Daddy checked the answering machine. There was a message from Kathy saying that Grandpa had passed away about 9:30 that night. Apparently, the staff at the center had helped him get settled for the night and had gone in to check him a while later and he was gone. It appeared that he had a peaceful passing. When they called Mother, she tried to reach Kathy via her cell phone but couldn't so she called her brother, Don, and he arrived as quickly as he could. By that time Kathy had returned mother's call and she and Dick joined them. They went to the care center and took care of things there. Kathy stayed with Mom until Deniece arrived on Sunday.

From there, the next few days were a flurry of activities, making funeral preparations and arranging rides and overnight stays. Daddy and I were asked to sing a duet, "Our Happiness" on the program, Shauntel was asked to play an organ solo, and the grands and great-grandchildren were asked to sing, "I Am I Child of God". I was able to locate another version of the song which had a violin obligato and nicer accompaniment.

Finding appropriate organ music was another challenge since Shauntel didn't bring her organ supplies with her. We made several phone calls trying to locate some music and eventually went to Chesbros and bought an organ book that Shauntel knew several pieces from. Her friend in Iowa City went to her home, retrieved her organ shoes, and over-night expressed them to us. They arrived Wednesday morning before we left for Utah.

Grandma faxed the music for our duet to us and we tried to fax Maurine's music for the grandchildren number to her but without success. I was writing the obituary and e-mailed it to Kathy. After several editing's due to the high cost of submission to the Salt Lake newspapers, we finally had the finished copy and it was e-mailed to the Tribune and Deseret News. Steve put another copy of it in our Idaho Falls Post Register. All in all, it made for a very stressful few days.

Because of job commitments Chet was unable to attend the funeral so Becky offered to take Shauntel and I on Wednesday so that I could be there for a private viewing on Wednesday afternoon and so Shauntel could practice on the organ. Daddy couldn't come until Thursday because of heavy commitments here. We dropped Becky off at Paul and Jenny's with her three and we continued on to Salt Lake. I dropped Shauntel off at Grandma's church and I went with Grandma and Deniece to the mortuary. Most of my siblings and their spouses were already there and we spent a pleasant and sweet time together, checking Grandpa and seeing if he looked the way he should. We all agreed that his hair wasn't combed properly so we asked the mortician for a comb, jelly, and scissors and we cut and styled his hair to look more natural. We took pictures and visited. It was a sweet time together.

Later that evening we went to Kathy's for salads and sandwiches and then we left to take Shauntel and Camille to the motel that she and Dave and Andrea were sharing for the night. Upon arriving, we discovered that there had been a mistake in the reservation and there was only one double bed in the room so Shauntel went with me to Centerville. Becky was getting her three to bed and Tate was struggling with being in a strange place at bedtime, but before long he settled down and was asleep.

We had a short but sweet visit with Paul and Jenny and then we all retired for the night.

Paul and Jenny had a canning assignment the next morning at 8:00 so they were up and gone before most of us were up. We scurried around and left about nine for the stake center. We had arranged for the nursery room to be open so the children could run off some energy before the services began. Shauntel and Becky had treats for the bunch in the nursery and the individual families were able to view the body and greet Grandma at their leisure. About 11:45 the family were gathered into the Relief Society room for the family prayer which was offered by Dick. The room was filled to capacity by the time we gathered up everyone. Not only did we have my siblings and their families, but we had several of Grandpa and Grandma's siblings and their families so it was quite a bunch. It was an unexpected pleasure for me to see 19 of my own cousins, many whom I haven't seen for over 30 years.

The services were beautiful. By the time Deniece, Charles and Nathan had given their talks, I felt

confident that Grandpa would feel satisfied with their depiction of his life. Daddy and I were able to sing our song without breaking down and Shauntel's organ piece was beautiful. Even though I hadn't been able to get the accompaniment to Maurine, she was able to practice it prior to the funeral and that and the violins were a nice addition. I think Grandma was pleased with the services.

Following our time at the cemetery, we returned for a nice luncheon at the church provided by the ward family. It gave us a chance to visit and relax before heading home. It was a full but very rewarding day.

It has been a treat to have Shauntel and Camille here with us for most of last week. They spent the weekend with the Archibald's and will be returning today. Shauntel made a long list of everything we needed to do to get the yard ready for our Sunday festivities and she has been cleaning, weeding, and has even offered to stain the redwood patio furniture for us. How can I refuse an offer like that? Anyway, I have appreciated her help and advice.

We are gearing up for the crowds, starting Wednesday with Tim's return at 2:36. I have been so busy that I have hardly had time to think of him so the time has flown by. SaraKay is babysitting the next two days for her violin teacher and so she is gainfully employed there. Daddy left this morning for Island Park to supervise a training there for a couple of days. Shauntel is due here any minute so I need to finish this up and get into my day.

School is starting a week from today. Yesterday Alva Lu and Allan dropped in to visit and express condolences. They sent a beautiful blossoming plant to the funeral and I ended up with it. I really appreciated their sensitivity.

Update: Steph and Linds got moved, Chet is in Indiana for a week-long MBA orientation, Becky and Chet sold and bought a home last week and are moving the end of August, Paul and Jenny are moving on Tuesday, Randy is in D.C. for a six-week seminar, Tim is going through the Monterrey temple tomorrow with one of his convert families. Love, Mom

August 27, 2002

[Mom] Tim arrived home on August 14th at the Idaho Falls airport at 2:30 p.m. His hair was cut close, his suit sagged, and his shoes looked as if he had walked many a dusty mile. His baggage

looked worse than his shoes and we all had to comment that this was certainly not the "fashion king" that we had sent off two years earlier. We had a good laugh over his weather-worn shoes but I couldn't help thinking about the phrase, "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publisheth peace".

It was fun to have Shauntel and Camille as well as Becky, Maddie, Tate, and Larsen with us to welcome him home. Mike had attended the wedding of one of his best friends in the Timpanogas Temple earlier that day and made a mad dash home to be at the airport when Tim arrived, but it didn't work out and he met us at home later. Following our greeting at the airport, Daddy took Tim to see Grandpa and Grandma Larsen before they came home and we gathered for dinner. Uncle Mark and Jeanette came by to see him also; they were in the area working on their rental house they had bought in Rexburg. It was nice to have most of the afternoon and evening together, visiting and letting Tim talk about his experiences. The evening was a warm, pleasant one and we sat on the grass and on the swing while the kids played on the trampoline. It was choice to have Mike a part of the homecoming since he knew the right questions to ask and, of course, since they both served in Mexico, there was some comparing done as to the differences in their missions.

On Thursday morning both Tim and Mike left for Idaho Falls to help Becky and Chet pack for the upcoming move. Just a couple of weeks earlier they had put their home on the market. They began hunting for another home and during the week that Chet was gone to the convention in Salt Lake, Becky located a home in the Ammon area and made an offer on it, that was accepted. They were elated and their elation turned to amazement when within a few days they had an offer on their own place. It was truly miraculous how it all came together for them and has allowed them to get situated before Chet becomes too involved with his MBA program. He spent a week at the University of Indiana, August 11-14, and now has 2-3 hours of homework each night to keep pace with his assignments. It's intense, but he has been very pleased with it so far and hopes to be able to keep up with it despite his demands at work.

Anyway, to get back to my account, Mike and Tim spent Thursday helping get things packed up and Tim spent a couple days last week helping out. Becky is paying him by the hour for his work and it

has been a Godsend to have the work and secure the money for books and fees. Chet also helped Tim get an interview at the Rexburg Meleleuca Call Center in the hopes of securing a part-time job for the coming school year. Tim will go on Tuesday for his interview and hopes to meet with his advisor, buy some books and just get a feel for the campus again. It's an exciting time for him. I'm so grateful that the way is opening for him to get back into school.

Our time with Shauntel and Camille was so sweet. I don't know what I would have done without Shauntel's help. Not only did she lend a hand with the cooking and cleaning, she replaced the downstairs shower head, stained the picnic table and benches, helped me plan menus, and worked with me in the garden. Camille was so good to entertain herself while SaraKay was gone babysitting for most of two days and we thoroughly enjoyed the chance to be together. I realized as we worked together how much I miss having a regular association with them. I'm so grateful that we are planning a trip this fall and will be able to share in the time when the new babies arrive for both her and Laurel. Randy will arrive home from D.C. on September 6th. It's been a long haul for him and they will all be grateful to have that training come to a close.

Friday night David, Andrea and family arrived and shortly thereafter the others who were due in that night. Mike, Sara Kay, and Tim drove to Salt Lake and met John and Emma at the airport. Their arrangement was to also meet Paul and Jenny and caravan home but the two vehicles were quickly separated and despite the walkie-talkie connection, they lost contact. Both groups arrived here later that evening.

By Saturday at noon nearly everyone was here except for Steve and his oldest four who were returning from the Johnson reunion in Alpine. Bonnie and Anne Marie arrived with Steph and Linds and family. It was so wonderful to be together! Between the trampoline, monkey bars, and tent that Daddy set up outside, and the toy menagerie downstairs, the grandkids kept occupied and the rest of us were able to get in some good visiting. One of my favorite times was when we practiced the musical numbers for the sacrament meeting program. That night Daddy barbequed chicken and cooked Dutch oven potatoes. We found enough corn that was ripe that we even had some corn-on-the-cob from our own garden. Later that evening we watched some old family home movies from our "early years",

thanks to Paul and Jenny and their efforts to get the projector up and running. It was fun to let the grandkids see their parents and some of our early activities.

Somehow on Sunday morning, despite the crowd, we managed to be ready and out the door by around 8:30 a.m. It was rewarding to have so many of our immediate family present for Tim's homecoming as well as extended family including Grandpa Larsen, Karen, Jim, and family, Gary and Linda, Rick and Terry and family, Curtis and Marie, and Katie and Brent from Rexburg. The chapel was filled to overflowing and Daddy and I felt good about the meeting and how well it was received. Tim did a masterful job with his report and the musical numbers were beautiful. Following the meeting, we fed about 85 people. Thank goodness it was a beautiful summer day and we were able to use our back yard for the overflow. I really appreciated all the help with the meal from daughters and daughters-in-law who provided salads and cookies and manpower.

One special treat we enjoyed that afternoon was having Grandpa Larsen here for a few hours following the dinner. Karen and Jim brought him to the sacrament meeting since Alva Lu was in southern Utah welcoming home another grandson. Following our dinner, Karen and Jim left for Utah and we had a chance to have Grandpa to ourselves. Daddy and Tim spoke that evening at a stake priesthood meeting and so most of the brothers as well as Grandpa attended the meeting with them. It was fun to share that experience as a family.

Monday morning we packed camping gear and most of the group left for Island Park Scout Camp. Tim invited Janalee to go with us and Mike had a girl friend from Provo who also came along. I got SaraKay off to her first day of school and then picked her up at noon and we joined the family at the waterfront by early afternoon. It was beautiful weather and between the canoes, kayaks, and sailboats, we kept busy. That night Daddy provided a campfire and Shauntel had prepared some questions that were distributed to family members and each took a turn answering them. We included the children in this event and it was truly a sweet experience to hear from each family member as well as our guests. Some questions were serious and others were funny. It was a great activity and gave us all a chance to express ourselves and our feelings.

Tuesday brought more water sports, volleyball, and Linds hosted a craft session that captured the imagination of the whole family. By late afternoon most of the group headed for home except for Daddy and Tim who stayed overnight to lock up camp after Shauntel, Camille, Paul and Jenny, Beth, and Mike got away for their trip back to the Midwest. They thought that leaving from Island Park would save them several hours on their trip and so they left early Wednesday morning, driving caravan, and using the walkie talkies to keep touch with each other. As luck would have it, that way home turned out to be shorter but much more time consuming than they had imagined and by the end of the first day they were about 200 miles short of their projected destination. Despite this, by Thursday evening they had all safely arrived home and called to let us know.

On Wednesday I drove John and Emma to Salt Lake and delivered them to Laurel's sister's home where they were going to stay until they flew out Friday morning. John spent some time with Grandma Ilene getting a genealogy file on all the work she has done on both her and Grandpa's lines and we had supper there with her. John was going to spend part of Thursday with Bishop Sowell, attend a party of all his old BYU roommates that night at David Hammonds' and then leave for Michigan the next morning. I spent the night at Grandma's and was grateful for the opportunity to visit with her. She is adjusting well to her present situation. It was therapeutic for me to have her share some of her experiences and feelings regarding Grandpa's passing. I appreciated that special time with her.

I returned home Thursday morning to a quiet house. I had my first day of school on Friday and that night Tim hosted a date party here including a rousing game of "Human Clue". He had another group date on Saturday afternoon and evening and spoke in Riverside Third Sunday morning. He has certainly kept busy but he confessed to me yesterday that he feels so lonely without his companion at his side. He called Shane last night and they spent some time together. Hopefully getting into school will help him get his adjustment made.

[Dad] I won't add a lot because this letter is so long already but it is pretty comprehensive in covering the last couple of weeks. One of the joys of having Tim home has been his knowledge of the scriptures and the gospel and his ability to teach. With each of the talks he has given he has instructed and taught and we have learned

insights that we hadn't had before. For example, in referring to Moroni 7:46 he replaced the word charity with Christ--what an insight. Also, in the scriptural references to Kolob--he also said Christ is Kolob and put Him into the context of those references--it fits. Thursday after he got home, he and Mike and I were able to go to the temple together and he taught us there also. It is pretty humbling to be taught and instructed in the Gospel by your youngest son--but also a joy to share.

Things are coming together for the Tiger Ear Booth. I am grateful for all the good help that Don Scott and others put into that project or it wouldn't happen. I too, reveled in the family involvement in the events of the past couple weeks. You are our greatest source of joy!! Friday I had just got into the office here in Blackfoot when there was a knocking on the door. I opened it to find Linda there--she had seen me going in to the office on her way to work and had turned around to share the good news that Gary had been hired full-time to teach at the academy which is starting up this year as a high school extension of the charter school that Sue works at. I was so pleased.

I also wanted to comment on having Dad here for the day of Tim's welcome home and also for the stake priesthood meeting that night. It was great to be able to have him share in those important events, but it was also gratifying to hear the expressions of love from so many who appreciated seeing Dad after so long. There are many in this stake whose lives have been touched by him.

Paul and Shelly Mangum commented after Sacrament meeting how they enjoy it so much when our family comes--it seems like they are sitting in the midst of the Tabernacle Choir.

September 10, 2002

[Mom] The good news of the week is that the fair is successfully over for another year. It is always a stressful time for Daddy, but despite a few rainy days, they broke all records again. I was grateful that the shifts filled up and that I didn't have to substitute. We helped last night with the final clean-up for FHE.

Tim left for BYU-Idaho on Wednesday. He had sorted, purchased, and packed his possessions and was ready to go with Chad on Tuesday, but he still had some loose ends to finish up, so we convinced him to wait a day and Daddy and I took him. It made for a fun afternoon for us to be on

campus and feel the excitement in the air. Daddy gave him a blessing before we left to come home and that was a sweet experience for all of us. Tim is living with Shane and Chad and they also have three freshmen who share the apartment. He called on Thursday and was excited about his classes. He said that he had already visited with Caetie and Brent (who is rooming with two of Tim's SR friends) as well as JoEllen and Jeff. It's fun for them to have some cousins on campus and renew those relationships.

Tim came home over the weekend to attend the Demolition Derby. There was a big bunch of kids that went together, but eventually it ended up with Tim with Janalee and they had a great time. They continue to date although not exclusively.

I left Friday morning at six to attend a two-day training in Utah. I really had not wanted to go but with taking the two weeks of harvest off for our trip east, I didn't feel that I could refuse. We had a fun time and certainly enjoyed the posh accommodations at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake. Staying there was an educational experience in and of itself. The owner has decorated it with original art pieces that he has collected from all over the world and it was absolutely amazing. It would have been even nicer if Daddy could have come along! Anyway, all of Friday and most of Saturday were absorbed with attending the conference which was on the new research on the brain and what implications it has for teaching. Some of it was really good, but I hated being gone, especially when I knew Tim was home for the weekend. I agree with Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, *"There's no place like home, there's no place like home."*

I had the opportunity this past week to spend a few hours with Grandpa Larsen while Alva Lu went to the temple. We decided that we would drive to Firth and visit with his sister, Gerry, who is in her 95th year. She lives in a lovely two-story home on River Road. It was fun to see a part of Firth that I haven't seen for many, many years. The road crosses the Snake River and then follows its winding path for several miles. The river was so beautiful and the foliage along the banks was green and lush. I would have liked to stop right on the bridge and just take in the beautiful scenery, but it was a busy time of day and we would have obstructed traffic. The area is still very rural, with small farms, grazing lands, and beautiful homes as well as old homesteads all along the road.

Gerry's home is nestled among trees with a large yard and lots of flowers as well as an adjoining pasture where there was a large herd of Angus cattle. The house and surrounding outbuildings were a part of a ranch owned by Gerry and her husband, Eldro. Gerry is presently in a wheel chair and is cared for by a CNA who comes in each day to help her.

The home is large but it appeared that Gerry spends most of her hours in the front room where she has a view of the surrounding countryside as well as the front driveway and entrance. Although Grandpa is a little shaky when he walks, the minute we arrived, he climbed out of his SUV and waited for me to retrieve his walker so he could be on his way. I helped him maneuver through a large wooden gate that bordered the lawn and we were soon standing on the front porch.

Prior to our visit, we had called Gerry and we knew that she was expecting us so we knocked and continued knocking until we could hear her making her way to the door. When she answered the door, she was in her wheelchair and was wearing a floral housecoat and white slippers. Her hair was a bit disheveled and almost as white as her slippers which covered her two arthritic feet. I couldn't help compare her with the Gerry that I used to know who had beautiful, thick red hair and was always picture perfect in her appearance. She was now only a shadow of the woman I remembered from years past. But, it became obvious the minute we greeted her that she was the same gracious and kind lady that she has always been. She was so pleased to see Grandpa and she kept referring to him as "My little Bus". She had Grandpa sit on a living room chair and she pulled her wheelchair up close until their knees were touching and they visited there for two and a half hours, reminiscing about days gone by and their memories of home and family. I sat near-by, regretting that I hadn't brought a pad of paper and pen to record the sweet stories that they shared.

When our visit was over and Grandpa and I left, I promised him that I would record what I remembered of their conversation since some of the accounts of his parents he had never heard before. I thought that you children would like to know some of it, too.

As most of you are aware, Grandma Florence Tingey Larsen was raised in a prominent family in Salt Lake in the early 1900's. She received a teaching degree and secured employment in

southern Utah in Mount Pleasant. It was while she was teaching there that she met James Berkeley Larsen and fell in love. Her parents had mixed emotions about her marrying and moving to southeastern Idaho to become a farmer's wife, but soon after their wedding, they relocated to a farming area along the Blackfoot River. Compared to the Salt Lake area, Idaho was pretty primitive and the life they led was far from easy. Aunt Geraldine was born in 1910 with five other siblings arriving in the ensuing years. Grandpa was the fourth child and at the time of his birth, Gerry was nine-years-old and Maxine was seven. Bim, the son two years older than Grandpa, became his tormentor and loved to tease him while Gerry and Maxine became his surrogate mothers, always protecting and looking out for his welfare.

For some reason, he became "Bus" to the family and that nickname stuck until many years later. (I remember Grandma Barbara calling him that occasionally.) Aunt Gerry remembers that when she was very small her mother was called to be the stake Primary president. The stake at that time extended from Shelley to Blackfoot and when her mother (Flossie) was required to make visits to the different wards, she would bundle up Gerry and Maxine and drive horse and buggy to the Firth train siding. Flossie had a fear of horses but she put this aside when it came time to make her visits. She would hitch the horse and buggy up to a railing by the train siding and she would wait there for the train. When she saw it approaching, she would wave her white handkerchief and flag it down and then she and the two little girls would board the train for Blackfoot. Upon arrival there, she would make her visits and then at the end of the day, return via train to Firth and then home. It made for a long day, but she continued to do that until she was released.

Gerry and Maxine loved to take care of "Bus" and she remembered one time they decided to dress him up to look like a little girl. They had a package of crepe paper and they fashioned a little red dress and even a bonnet with ruffles for him to wear. They played with him in his cute outfit until a while later some company arrived. She remembers everyone having a good laugh over how cute he looked. Luckily, he was too small to realize what was going on.

Gerry remembers the teasing that Bim used to do to Grandpa and she rescued him many a time. She would say with all the authority she could muster, "Bim, you just leave my little Bus alone!"

She said that Grandpa was such a sweet and trusting child and kind to everyone he met. She said that he was like that as a little boy and he has continued to be like that throughout his life. He also was resourceful and could fix about anything that was broken

One time Maxine and James Berkeley were both in the hospital having appendectomies and Flossie was determined to go visit them. For some reason the car wouldn't start and it had to be pulled by the tractor to get it going. The tractor had a crank on the front of it and it was difficult to manage since once the cranking began and the motor started, the crank would flip around and slap the person on the arm who was cranking it. I guess this had happened enough that no one felt like they wanted the task and Flossie was beside herself trying to get the help she so desperately needed. After being turned down by everyone she asked, Grandpa said that he could do it and he went out into the farm yard, cranked up the crank and started the tractor. He was only a very young boy at the time and it quite amazed everyone. Gerry's comment was, "Bus was like that. He could do anything he put his mind to. That trait characterized him his whole life."

During the flu epidemic of 1920 nearly everyone in the family got sick. Flossie nursed her four children for weeks before they were passed danger, but then she got it and became deathly ill herself. Grandpa Berkeley hired a woman to come in and take care of the house and family while Flossie recovered. Grandpa Larsen didn't remember it since he was so young, but Gerry remembered that the woman was capable but very stern and none of them ever dared disobey her. They were very relieved when Flossie recovered and resumed her role as mother again.

Both Grandpa and Gerry remembered their father as being kind and gentle and never raising his voice in anger. Grandpa said that one time he was deserving of a good spanking but that when his father came upon him in the act, he told him to go get a switch. He hurried away, returning with a switch and while handing it to his father, his watch fell out of his pocket and the chain broke. His father looked at the broken chain, took him by the hand, and said, "Let's go get your watch fixed". That was the end of that.

Gerry recalled convincing her father that she should get to mow the hay. It was one of her favorite jobs on the farm and he agreed to it but cautioned her that she would need to add oil to

the tractor with every other round she made in the field. Well, she forgot and before long, the tractor seized up and she had to go find her father and tell him that she had forgotten his important instructions. She said that he told her that she would have to get their horse and that she would need to ride the horse into Blackfoot and buy a new part for the one she had ruined. He then told her that he hoped as she rode along she would have time to think about her mistake and commit herself to doing better the next time. She made that trip to Blackfoot, secured the part, and returned with it several hours later. Although riding the horse to Blackfoot was certainly not much of a punishment, she did feel gratitude to her kind father for his patience in dealing with her youthful foibles.

Well, those are some of the stories they shared and I thought they might give you a glimpse into their lives and times. I was so grateful to be able to share the afternoon with them and to see the sweetness of their relationship. There is something very touching about watching two siblings after a life-time of living, sit together and recall the good times and bad. There were a couple times when Gerry couldn't understand what Allan was saying because the Parkinson's has slurred his speech a little and there were a couple times when they couldn't hear well and I had to act as interpreter, but it was a pleasant, even poignant exchange between them and I was so grateful that we went.

[Dad] Yes!! Tiger Ears are over for another year. Last week was a demanding week with all the physical demands of hauling in the ingredients and keeping all the volunteers lined up and keeping the booth running at the max for the buyers available. The week before was full of rounding up the ingredients and getting the booth ready after the fair's remodeling this year. It ended up being clean and a little roomier for the workers, but with less storage space for ingredients and no staging area to change shifts. We ended up about \$3,000 better than last year despite the small crowds on Tuesday and the rain on Friday and Saturday. An article in the Morning News reported that we use 500 tons of flour in the Tiger Ear Booth. That just makes me tired to think of it. (They got the decimal place two places too far to the right.

We had a good Blackfoot District Committee meeting on Thursday night and a Key 4 meeting. I feel like we are getting a handle on most things in

the district. I enjoy the people I have the opportunity of working with.

Wednesday night was High Council meeting and Sunday was full of meetings and interviews. We are gearing meetings and events to be covered adequately while we make our trip at the end of this month. That is turning out to be quite a trick, but we are excited about the prospects of seeing our Midwesterners in their natural habitat. We will get home just in time for Christian's wedding and General Conference.

September 16, 2002

[Mom] It's Sunday afternoon and Daddy is in a meeting somewhere in the area and my adorable, wonderful, beautiful daughter Sara Kay (SaraKay wrote that) and I are here alone enjoying the chance for some "down" time

I just got off the phone with Shauntel and Mike who were calling to go over with me the schedule for our trip East. When we planned this trip, we thought it was the perfect time to visit, but the closer we get, the crazier the whole schedule has become. Despite that, we are going to move ahead and handle it a day at a time, hoping that these new babies will cooperate and arrive in a timely fashion. I've been so busy with taking care of things here at home that I have almost forgotten that we will have the chance to go through the Nauvoo Temple and see firsthand the things we have seen via satellite for the last several months. It is going to be a wonderful opportunity and there is a chance that Paul and Jenny may join us in Nauvoo and share that time with us, too.

My job has settled down a bit and I've been grateful for that. I have felt that the quality of teaching going on in our school this year is not as good as it was last year, but I have had to back away and be supportive. Sometimes it is hard to just be an aide, but at other times I realize that my job is as involved as I can handle both physically and mentally and that I need to do my best in my own sphere and not let things get to me. I still don't see how women handle high pressured jobs and still give their home and family the attention they need. I don't envy the teachers and administrator who have so much out-of-class preparation.

Daddy has been on the go with his work. His new responsibilities are very demanding. He arrived home about four on Saturday and commented that he hoped he could keep up with the

additional responsibilities that his boss is putting on him. His immediate superior quit a couple weeks ago and in the meantime the rest of the team is not only doing their duties, but covering for him, too. I'm glad that we are having a chance to get away for a couple of weeks but I know that Daddy is going to be scrambling to get things done so that volunteers are prepared to carry on in his absence.

Daddy's health is good, partly because of his devotion to his early morning exercise routine. As the winter weather approaches, he will need to do some altering in his routine (biking) but he is committed to his daily schedule and amazes me with his persistence.

I spent another enjoyable Wednesday with Grandpa Larsen. We decided to go to Rexburg to see some of the additions to the campus. He and Alva Lu have been invited to attend a President's dinner the 19th at the new Gordon B. Hinckley multi-use building and so we took time to find the building and situation. It was fun to be on campus even though we were taking a driving tour and at one point, we stopped and asked for directions and while we were stopped, Jeff saw us and came up to our car and said hello. He was on his way home from his last class of the day and so he rode along and gave us directions and then we took him to his apartment. We chatted with him for a while and both Grandpa and I had to comment later about what a fine young man he is and how proud Mark and Rita can be of their family. He lives in a home across the street from Viking Stadium that his folks bought and renovated and are renting out. Jeanette and Josh live in the basement and Jeff and other renters live on the main level. It has been quite a project for Mark to get it fixed up and ready for the school year, but it is a lovely home and certainly convenient to the campus.

When we returned home, we watched Fox news regarding the 9/11 commemoration in New York. Grandpa and I visited enroute regarding President Bush's stance on Iraq and other issues in the world right now. I am always amazed at how sharp Grandpa is and how much he is aware of what is going on in our world and nation. Of course, that should not surprise me. He has always taken an active interest in world affairs and been a strong advocate for involvement in the political process.

SaraKay and I spent Friday evening with Becky and kids. Chet was due home from Korea on Saturday, but midweek his plans were changed

and his assignment was extended until Thursday of this week. Of course, that was pretty disappointing for the family, but we found them to be in good spirits and dealing with things pretty well. Becky is still hanging pictures and finding places for things, a seemingly endless task after a move, but their home is looking more put together every day and it has been such a relief to have the sale and move over and life settling down for them. Chet's IU course over the internet occupies his evenings, but even in Korea he can get online and take care of what he needs to do.

In closing I thought that I would like to mention a conversation I had with Andrea. She told me that she was becoming a true Idaho girl. This past week she bottled pickles and over 50 jars of peaches! (It made me tired just thinking about it). Anyway, she said that when she was transferring them to their basement storage room, she realized that their present shelving in the storage room was already filled to capacity and that she mentioned to David that they would need to get some more.

Saturday, she went garage-saling and, to her amazement, she found three beautiful shelving units at one of the sales for only \$20. She had never seen any shelving at any sales before, but there it was, just waiting for her to come along. She immediately bought it and by nightfall they had added the shelves and stocked them with the pickles and peaches. She commented on how the Lord has seen to their every need and that in so many ways, both large and small, He supports them in their righteous desires. I had to voice "Amen" to that since we, too, find our needs being met and miracles happening to enable us to carry out our righteous endeavors. I know the Lord is aware of us and that He hears our prayers.

[Dad] Last night we received a call about 10:30 from David and found out that he was called to be the Elder's Quorum President in his ward. Also, the family they have been teaching as ward missionaries is being baptized next week. I believe Mike was just sustained to the same responsibility yesterday. How proud I am of each of you and the callings you have and the opportunities to influence others for good. I know that in the eyes of the world some callings are more prestigious than others, but in the eyes of the Lord each one is important and the critical thing is how we serve rather than where.

That was re-emphasized to me yesterday as we were discussing recommendations for leadership

in an Elder's quorum in the stake. There was a list of about 20 being considered—all of them good men with testimonies of the Gospel and recommend holders—but it seemed like they all had the same problem—the fire in their lives seemed to be just embers and they didn't really fan the flames in any calling they have had.

President Shipley spent Friday and Saturday in a Stake President's training seminar in Twin Falls with Elder Maxwell and a couple of other General Authorities. He said that the main theme of their meetings was the need for conversion—a mighty change of heart that causes one to have no more desire to do evil.

Saturday, I had the opportunity of participating in the opening ceremonies of a five-stake new scout day camp at Jackson's Trout farm. I bugled, "To the Colors" for the flag ceremony and then I was the "community or civic leader" to talk to them about their responsibilities. I thought I might include some of my thoughts from that talk:

The United States of America was conceived by men with an innate desire to be free. Initially colonized by individuals seeking opportunity, freedom of religion, and economic liberty, it didn't take long for representatives of the 13 primary colonies to determine that they would be better off if they declared their independence. They rankled under the continuous presence of soldiers, the heavy taxes they paid for their productive efforts, and being dictated to by the King of England. They put their lives and property on the line when they signed the Declaration of independence on July 4, 1776. The Revolutionary War followed and dragged on for five years before a treaty was signed recognizing the United States as an independent nation.

George Washington, our first elected president, acknowledged the hand of Providence in bringing about the victory of a rag-tag army over one of the greatest fighting forces up to that date in history. His vice president and successor as President of the United States, John Adams, was extremely influential and involved in the process of declaring independence, negotiating treaties with France, and eventually writing the Constitution and Bill of Rights. He was very vocal in his writings and his speeches about giving credit to God for bringing about this great country and influencing thoughts and events that led to the acceptance of the Constitution which establishes our method of government and the rights and privileges we often take for granted.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—I then told about these two men, their differences, and their friendship and how they came to die on the same day—the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the heavenly manifestations when Adams died.

Do you like to get together with your friends? Read all sorts of books and newspapers and magazines? Live in a home where no one can enter unless invited? These are rights that cannot be taken from you. You have the right to believe in any religion you want. You enjoy freedom of speech, and can travel freely.

Your rights, guaranteed by the Constitution and its amendments, including the Bill of Rights, are shared by all Americans. It doesn't matter where we live, how much money we have, the color of our skin, whether we are male or female, or what we think, we are all equal under the law. Rarely in human history have the rights of every person been so respected. (Boy Scout Handbook)

But you and I must be proactive as citizens to maintain those rights. There are forces at play that would erode those rights from you and me for selfish interests and personal gain. You can be a good citizen every day by caring for this land, this state, this community, your homes. Obey the laws of the land, respect those who represent the law, clean up after yourselves, look for ways you can give service and lift another's burden, leave little or no trace when you are out in nature, take an active part in class and school elections and activities, be a leader and influence those around you for good, respect those who may be different in race or color or belief, don't call people names, don't put others down, make sure everything you do and say is praiseworthy, and be obedient to the spiritual guidance of your religious leaders.

In just a few short years you will have the responsibility through casting your vote to elect members of the state legislature, Senators and Representatives, the President of the United States, members of the school board, county commissioners, and judges. Be informed, take an active role in the political process by helping with campaigns and the political party of your choice. "This land is your land, this land is my land. From California to the New York island, from the red wood forest to the gulf stream waters, this land was made for you and me."

October 10, 2002

[Mom] It has been so long since I wrote last that I hardly know where to begin. Let me just review our last couple of weeks and our experiences in the Midwest. As time for our vacation drew near, Daddy's work and church demands seemed to intensify. We had originally planned to leave on Saturday the 21st and have a leisurely trip to Michigan, arriving on Monday the 23rd. Those plans were altered when Daddy found out that he had to be in Island Park for a Venturing Fall Olympics on Friday and Saturday. We decided to go to Plan B which was to leave early Sunday morning. I was feeling frustrated with the delays but I knew that Daddy couldn't leave until he had completed the last of his duties. He arrived home Saturday night about 6 and we began packing. By late that evening, we had pretty much packed up the car, the cooler, audio tapes, snacks, drinks, and anything else we thought might help pass the time on the trip.

Steve and Bonnie and family arrived that evening in preparation for Bonnie's parent's farewell the next morning. We felt badly that we missed the Benson's farewell but we were grateful to be able to provide a bed and breakfast for their family Saturday night. We even got in a sweet visit with Steve later that night after things settled down a bit. (Bonnie has since mentioned that her parents had an absolutely thrilling experience in the MTC!)

We had been debating whether to rent or buy a car since we knew that neither of our cars were reliable enough to make the trip. Ron Mangum was checking at the auction each week trying to find us a car. Right up until the week we left, he had been unsuccessful, but called on Tuesday and said that he had located a fairly new minivan that had low miles and drove like a dream. We decided that rather than put our money into a rental, we would buy the van. It was a very nice way to make our trip.

We left about six Sunday morning and drove for 14 hours, making it to Des Moines, Iowa. Our MapQuest instructions gave the travel time to Canton as 28 hours so we figured that we would have to drive 14 hours on both Sunday and Monday. That night as we pulled into the motel, I felt so stiff and tired that I wasn't sure I could get myself out of the car. I couldn't imagine driving a second day for that many hours. Fortunately, when Daddy compared the miles we had gone and those left, he discovered that we were about 2/3 the way to Canton and so we didn't have quite

the marathon the next day. (Daddy did almost all the driving, so I shouldn't complain) We arrived at John and Laurel's about five that evening.

Their home is located in a quiet neighborhood with their lot opening onto a densely wooded wildlife refuge. They have had racoons come up onto their patio and they have seen a deer on occasion. Their home is beautiful and they are gradually getting it decorated the way they want it. One of the first things Emma did was to take us upstairs to see her cute bedroom. One of my favorite features is a patio area that extends almost the entire length of the house and a beautifully landscaped yard that includes mature trees, shrubs and flower beds.

Of course, one of the first things John did was take Daddy for a ride in his Ford Escape! It really is a nice car and we had several opportunities to enjoy it. It was amazing for us to see all the fancy Ford cars on the roads everywhere and interesting to visit with John about his job and the company.

Of course, the main attraction wasn't the SUV, but Eliza who arrived on September 16th, weighing in at about 8 and 1/2 pounds! She is really a beautiful little girl with lots of black hair and a sweet disposition. We thoroughly enjoyed the chance to get acquainted with her as well as to have time with James and Laurel who we hadn't seen for over a year! Laurel's mom had been there for nearly a week helping her with her recovery and left the Monday that we arrived. I worried about our visit being too much for Laurel so soon after giving birth, but she and John were certainly gracious hosts and we appreciated all they did to show us around and make us feel welcome.

On Tuesday John took us to the Ford Museum in Dearborn. We had no idea what a wonderful experience it would be! The museum is not only an exhibit of the evolution of the automobile in the United States, but it is a wonderful collection of inventions from all ages up until the present time. I enjoyed the household furnishings, appliances, and furniture areas and Daddy liked the machinery and auto displays. SaraKay and Emma enjoyed it all. We spent several hours there and could have spent several days. It was so fascinating and made me realize just how many changes I have seen in my lifetime. We truly live in a day of ease and abundance. It was so amazing to see what a woman had to do a century ago to make her own fabric, soap, candles for light, and food for the table. Just surviving was a full-time

job not only for the homemaker but for everyone in the family!

We also saw the movie, "Lewis and Clark" at the IMAX theatre in the museum. It portrayed their fateful trip up the Missouri and into the Northwest. It was interesting as well as inspiring to hear of their adventures and the many miracles that occurred along the way that enabled them to successfully complete their journey and report back to Thomas Jefferson about the vastness and richness of this newest U.S. acquisition. It reaffirmed my testimony of the many preparations that were being made that this land would be ready for the restoration of the gospel.

After saying our good-byes, we left Thursday morning for Wisconsin. It was about a six-hour trip. The country that we drove through was truly breathtaking. Wisconsin is mile after mile of rolling hills with picturesque farmsteads and groves of trees. Everything was so green, lush and clean. We arrived at Paul and Jenny's early afternoon, enjoyed a delicious lunch, and then went exploring to the nearby lake that borders the campus. Beth rode along in Jenny's backpack and acted like she was right at home hiking the woods. Later we drove to the Institute building and toured the Institute and met their director before going a block away to the Engineering buildings where both Paul and Jenny have classes.

Paul was at his desk when we arrived and we met some of his study group. We also toured the building and then rode a bus to the student union building and spent some time out on a large patio area that borders a beautiful lake. There were classes on sailing and rowing in progress and the pleasant sunny day made a perfect time to just sit at the lakeside and relax as we enjoyed our ice cream cones and conversation. It was obvious that the campus gets a lot of mileage out of its beautiful setting and would attract students aesthetically as well as academically. Paul and Jenny both expressed that they have thoroughly enjoyed their opportunity to see some new country and make new friends. They have a nice situation in their married student housing and a lot of opportunities to share the gospel.

Since arriving in Wisconsin, they have spent time with Keith and Maggie who have been in the area for nearly eight years while Keith completes his doctorate. They invited us to dinner at their new home that night and we appreciated the chance to see their situation and meet their young family.

Although Keith wasn't the general contractor for their home, he has done a lot of the work and has also done some nice things with their two-acre yard. Their property is about 20 miles from Madison in a farming area. Their oldest child started first grade this fall. Between Jenny and Maggie, we had a delicious dinner and then took a tour of their yard and home. We even took some pictures that we're hoping to share with Nate and Maureen.

As we were driving to Richards', Paul mentioned that both Keith and Maggie were somewhat of a legend in the student ward. I guess that they were so generous and helpful to the other students that they were remembered and appreciated even though they no longer attended the ward. When Paul mentioned that he was Keith's cousin, he said that he immediately had the respect and admiration of their new ward. That's a sweet tribute to Keith and Maggie.

On Friday Paul and Jennie caravanned with us to Iowa, about a three-hour drive. After spending a few minutes at the Andersons, we drove to the campus and met Mike outside the dentistry building. He then took us on a tour of his classrooms, labs, and the actual area where he works on patients. He showed us a lot of the machinery and technology that they use every day. He modeled his dental uniform for us and introduced us to his "dummy" who he works on for all his practical assignments. It was pretty impressive!

Saturday morning, we left for Nauvoo. Originally Shaunte! was going to go with us but she had so much to get ready for her trip to Minneapolis that she decided not to go. We left about 6:30 a.m. and arrived at the temple to get our session tickets at 8:30. We were grateful that we had been told to pick up tickets in advance of the session because the temple was very busy and we might not have gotten into the session. It was fun to travel in our van and be able to visit enroute. SaraKay babysat Beth while we attended the session and then Jenny traded her off and she joined us in the temple for a baptismal assignment that we had scheduled. Daddy, Mike and Paul did all the confirming for a group of youth from a nearby branch and then Dad and Mike were the witnesses while Paul baptized SaraKay for 10 names. I was in the baptistry with the rest of the family and it made for a very special occasion.

Following lunch, we took several tours through old Nauvoo. Mike spent his afternoon at the Joseph Smith Academy studying for Monday's exams. About five we headed back to Iowa and arrived home about seven. Despite all the pressures that Shaunte! was feeling and the absence of Randy who was on call and never left the hospital for about 50 straight hours, Shaunte! was a gracious hostess and we so appreciated all her efforts.

Sunday morning Daddy, SaraKay, Paul, Jenny, Beth, and I first attended sacrament meeting with Shaunnie and Camille and then we left to attend Mike's branch with him. It was a very interesting opportunity for us to be in a small singles branch. Several of the students spoke in sacrament meeting and the Spirit was very strong. The brief breaks between meetings were truly social occasions and it was obvious that everyone was happy to have an LDS connection. We enjoyed the classes we attended and were so grateful for the chance to spend that time with Mike and get acquainted with his church friends. Later that afternoon and evening we had some one on one time with him and talked through his feelings about how things were going for him. He really keeps busy with his responsibilities with the Eider's quorum but he has a nice housing and roommate situation and feels like he is doing well with his schooling. He is e-mailing three girls that he dated over the summer and hopes to have time to see them over the holidays.

Following dinner, Daddy was able to give Mike and Paul priesthood blessings and then Paul and Jenny left for Wisconsin. We were grateful that they will be able to be home for Christmas. Beth is just at that stage where she is growing so fast and changing every day. She is such a contented baby and this has enabled them to keep up the pace of their school involvements. Hopefully it will keep working for them and they can accomplish their desires with school.

Following their departure, I spent some time helping Shaunte! pack for her trip to Minneapolis to get the new baby. I was amazed at all the preparations she had made to be ready. She had purchased several cute outfits, onesies, blankets, and had the baby crib set up and all the baby stuff ready for occupancy. She packed the car with everything that she and Camille would need for their extended stay in Rochester while they awaited the signing and processing of all the paperwork regarding the adoption.

The hard thing was that Shaunnie had to make all the preparations still knowing that at any time the birth parents could change their minds about the adoption and all the preparations would be for naught. Being there during this time really helped me to appreciate the stresses involved for the adoptive parents. Needless to say, every time the phone would ring, I worried that it might be the LDS social worker informing them that plans had changed. When we went to bed Sunday night we were grateful that Randy's call assignment was over at six Monday morning and that he could go with Shaunnie and Camille to Minnesota the next morning.

At 6:15 a.m. we heard him arrive home and they got on their way. We left several hours later for Rochester where Shauntel had reservations at an extended-stay facility. We arrived about three, checked in, and waited. We assumed that they would be along soon but it was 5:30 before we got a call informing us that they had the baby and were enroute. It was so sweet to be there when they arrived and to share in the experience with them. Randy immediately gave the baby an official examination, stem to stern, and confirmed that he was indeed a healthy, bouncing baby boy. He will be named Arch Jacob Anderson, honoring both Grandpa Richards and Randy's stepfather, Steve Archibald. He was born Wednesday, September 25th in Minneapolis. Arch has lots of black hair and seems to be adjusting well to his formula, his new family, and his eager older sister. Shauntel and Randy met both birth parents and felt good about that experience. As you can imagine, most of Monday night was spent with all of us taking turns holding the baby and celebrating by going out to eat at the Golden Corral. Randy left the next morning for home and we left about 10. Before leaving we spent some more time holding our youngest grandson and visiting with Shauntel and Camille. Shauntel wasn't sure just how long she would be in Minnesota, but when I called her today, (Wednesday) she had just received word that the paperwork was finished and that she could head home. That was great news! She was really getting tired of life in a one room apartment with two small children. (Camille said she didn't want to go home she was having so much fun watching TV eight hours a day and jumping on the bed!)

Our trip home was enjoyable. We came home through South Dakota seeing the Black Hills again. In Wyoming we ran into a blizzard and decided to get a motel room and hope that by

morning the weather would improve. It did and we were soon on our way. We arrived home on Wednesday early afternoon and Daddy was able to attend his meetings Wednesday night. We unpacked and Daddy left for the office to check in. He found he had 25 messages waiting for him and spent time trying to get things organized so that we could leave again on Thursday for Salt Lake. We spent Thursday night with Steph and Linds, leaving there the next morning to attend Christian's wedding in the Salt Lake Temple. Before going, we toured the Bennion's new home. It is framed in and the roof is on. Some of the interior walls are up and it was fun to walk through and see the layout. They have a beautiful view of the mountains out the front of the house and of the valley from their back patio. It is going to be a beautiful home and we are so excited for them! Their scheduled date for completion is the end of December. In the meantime, they are renting a home just up the street and the children are able to get their adjustment to new schools and a new ward made. They all seem to be very pleased with how things have turned out and we are delighted to have them settling in Cache Valley and a little closer to home.

The wedding was very sweet. We picked up Dad and Alva Lu at the Kimball and helped Grandpa get into the temple where he was able to use a wheelchair to get around. It was wonderful to share the experience with Scott and Jeanie and all of their family including Brock and Maren who flew in from Baltimore where Brock is attending school. Rick and Terry, and Karen were also in attendance as well as Coco from Vegas representing Staff's family. It was especially fun to see Jeremy who returned a few months ago from his mission. Following a wedding dinner, we spent the evening at Grandma Richard's condo. She had given us permission even though she knew she wasn't going to be there. She has been spending the last two weeks in Moscow, ID with Charles and family and will be returning the 16th. We were able to watch the BYU/Utah State game on TV. We knew that Steve and Bonnie were going with Steph and Linds and it was fun to think about them being there together. It was an unbelievable game!

Saturday morning we met the Shipley's and VanOrden's at the Hilton and walked to the Conference Center for conference. As usual, it was wonderful and we felt it a privilege to be able to attend. That afternoon we attended in the Joseph Smith Legacy Theatre and that evening Steve went to the priesthood session and then we all

met at the Olive Garden for dinner. Our only regret was that we didn't have Tim along to attend the session with Daddy. He had to work and wasn't able to get away until Saturday afternoon. We left Sunday morning after the first session and drove to Logan and spent a few hours with Steve and Bonnie before leaving for home. They had prepared a delicious Sunday dinner and we appreciated all their work to make it such a special occasion for us. SaraKay, who had spent the weekend with the Bennion's met us at the Larsen's and we picked her up there. We appreciated the Logan bunch helping us out.

When we arrived home Tim was here and we were able to have several hours of visiting with him before Janalee picked him up for the drive back to Rexburg. He was in good spirits and seems to be holding things together at school despite his heavy work schedule these last two weeks. He really likes his job with Melaleuca and appreciates Chet and Becky getting him on there.

The last few days have been pretty hectic for both Daddy and I. My usual enjoyable fall routine has suddenly turned into a frantic effort to gather in the squash, the pumpkins, pick the onions and dry them, get some spuds, mow the lawn one last time, pick the apples, and take care of the boxes of tomatoes that are ripening faster than we can eat them. We have all been feverishly working to beat the bad weather that has been forecast for this weekend. On top of that, Daddy and I have a two-day stake presidency retreat at Star Valley Friday and Saturday and so we'll lose another weekend. Hopefully we can get enough done to feel good about going.

I need to close. We love each of you. We were so blessed to be able to visit with several of you this past month. We marvel at all you are doing. We know that each of you face challenges and we pray each morning and night that you will be protected and able to bear up under the pressures of your endeavors. We are grateful for the Lord's watch care over us on our vacation and so thankful that the van functioned properly and that Daddy's health was such that he could stand the rigors of the long hours of driving.

[Dad] The Wednesday before we left on our trip, I broke away and took Dad to the temple. Sue babysat for Becky so she could go with us. It was such a sweet experience to sit in the chapel holding hands with Dad on one side and Becky on the other. It was also rewarding to see the love and respect the temple workers have for

"President Larsen." Dad and Becky were in the prayer circle together and that was sweet for both of them. Dad hadn't been in a prayer circle for a long time. We then enjoyed a group hug in the celestial room before leaving to return to the world.

One other choice experience—Family Home Evening this week. Chet and Becky and family joined us for supper and then a potato picking excursion. We had made arrangements with Bill Martin and went to his cellar and picked several hundred pounds of potatoes. Maddie and Tate were enthralled with the experience and amazed as they were able to go through the plenum and up on the back of the pile and see the whole cellar full of potatoes. The smell of potatoes and dirt, the sounds of the machinery, and the ambiance of the cellar filled us with nostalgia. It was really a memorable and sweet evening together. Amen to Mom's comments above.

October 16, 2002

[Mom] This past Friday Daddy and I attended a stake presidency's retreat in Alpine Wyoming at our stake president's cabin. The ride through Palisades and up through the mountains was absolutely beautiful with all the fall colors! Our weather has been unseasonably warm and the fall weather has lingered a little longer than usual. President Shipley's cabin is nestled on a mountainside in a grove of quaking aspen and pines and the view from the front deck was gorgeous! Our time together was memorable and it was fun for us wives to get a chance to participate in some of the planning for the coming year.

Becky and Chet invited SaraKay to spend the night with them and she did some babysitting for them and some guests that they were entertaining and she even made a little bit in the proposition so she was pleased with that as well as enjoying her time with the Seely's. We appreciated their willingness to help us out.

I guess the good news of the week is that Shauntel, Camille, and Arch arrived home last Wednesday and their vigil in Extended Stay America came to an end. Shauntel said that Baby Arch is having a little bit of a time with fussiness and they have tried to figure out just what is bothering him. I know that these first few weeks with a newborn are always a marathon and I was always glad to hit the six- week mark and see things settle down a bit. She has been carrying him around in one of those front carriers and she

said that it seems to calm him down when he can't get comfortable after a feeding. She's hoping that she isn't dealing with colic.

We appreciated the letters from Jenny and Laurel. I thought Emma's part, "I will only wear one pair of earrings" was a classic! Thanks to all of you for keeping touch via email or phone. The only problem with making a trip to the Midwest is that we miss everyone even more than before. Thank goodness we have modern technology to help us keep in touch.

This Thursday Grandpa and Grandma Larsen are leaving for St. George. Grandpa has been getting along pretty well although he did take a couple of bad falls this past week and scraped up his back. They are going to see how they get along and are planning on being home for a couple weeks at Christmas. Grandma Richards has been in Moscow with Charles' family for the past two weeks and will be flying home tomorrow. She has done a few more things now that Grandpa is gone. She never felt right about traveling around much while he was confined in the rest home.

Now that life is settling down a bit, I'm enjoying my job a little more. They have asked me to direct a Christmas musical program for the holidays and we started on our songs on Monday. It's fun to lead the kids and they are so sweet and receptive. For the most part I enjoy what I do, although I do come home pretty tired. Fortunately, I have several hours before SaraKay gets home so I can recuperate and get ready for her!

[Dad] One of the highlights of the week was FHE at Rick and Terry's. It was kind of a farewell for Dad and Alva Lu. Gary and Linda were there and we had a great visit. The food was wonderful as usual—Terry is such a great cook and Linda's salad was the best green salad I have ever had. It is sweet to feel the love and peace between siblings

Sue mentioned the stake presidency retreat—it was a fun and a spiritual time. Friday night we ate and then played a variation of Mafia with Nephites, prophets and robbers. Most had not played before and it took a while to get warmed up, but it was a lot of fun. The next morning we worked on a theme for next year: *"We become millennial people as we extend charity (the Pure Love of Christ) and keep our covenants."* We then talked about the upcoming stake conference and talks. Then we planned our approach to ward conferences this year.

District work is always busy with meetings and membership and getting things off the ground for another FOS campaign, Scouting for Food, and so on. I also am working on a new Wood Badge brochure, Powder Horn, Venturing Ski Days, Nature of Leadership treks, and so on. As I get older, I am finding it harder to keep so many balls in the air but I am enjoying my work and definitely feeling challenged.

In visiting with Gary Monday night I found out he is taking a poetry class at ISU toward his Master's degree. He said he hasn't ever cared for poetry before, but he is really enjoying writing poetry for this class and this form of expression. In reading the Meridian magazine comments for this week's Gospel Doctrine class on Isaiah 50-53 there was this quote about poetry:

"Poetry has been regarded as something central to existence, something having unique value to the fully realized life, something that we are better off having and spiritually impoverished " "Initially, poetry might be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language.

"The difference between poetry and other literature is one only of degree. Poetry is the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words. It is language whose individual lines, either because of their own brilliance or because they focus so powerfully what has gone before, have a higher voltage than most language has. It is language that grows frequently incandescent, giving off both light and heat."

I am hoping that Gary will share some of his poetry with us. I think he has written about some memories like milking the cow, the smells in a spud cellar, and so forth, that would be beneficial images for us to experience through his words and phrases of expression.

October 23, 2002

[Mom] Our beautiful fall weather continues although the forecast is for rain and maybe snow later this week. Today while I was on lunch duty there was a chill in the air and I found myself dreading the winter ahead. After seeing Palisades Reservoir, I know that we need to have a good, wet, winter to replenish our snow pack and so I'm trying to gear up for the coming days. This time of year is always a special time of thanksgiving for me as we continue to gather in all the "fruits" of our garden and trees. It never ceases to amaze

me at how much we can produce on our little acreage here and how nice it is to feel that we are to some extent, self-sufficient. This year has been an especially bounteous harvest and we have shared much of our produce with neighbors and friends. It's times like this that I wish we had more of you closer so we could pool our resources. Hopefully each of you are doing all you can to have a reserve of food and supplies in case of an emergency and that you strive to live as providently as possible.

SaraKay is enjoying being in the YW. Tonight they are going to Pocatello roller skating at Deleta for their activity and next week they have a Scout/Beehive stake dance for Halloween. She has lots of good friends in her YW group and she fits right in.

Her transition into junior high has been fairly easy, the only disappointment being that they canceled all seventh-grade sports and so she won't be trying out for the basketball team the way she had planned on. I suspect she won't try out next year for volleyball since most of the kids that make the teams start playing club ball their sixth-grade year in January and play almost year 'round, traveling to other communities to compete on Saturdays. We just felt that it was more time and money than we were willing to commit to and so did SaraKay. It's too bad that some of these sports have become so demanding that it eliminates some students from playing.

Our thoughts and prayers have been with Randy and Shauntel these past few days as they have been struggling to keep pace with all the night-time work involved with a newborn. Arch has a fussy time from 3 a.m. to about 6:30 a.m. and sometimes even until noon. It's been a challenge to figure out what's going on with him and get him to settle down.

Some days the only thing that works is for Shauntel to carry him in the pouch on her while she works around the house and takes care of her daily tasks. Our prayers are with them. These newborns can really wear you out. I'm always glad to get them a little less fragile.

Tim called on Sunday and we had a good visit about school, work, and Janalee. He is thoroughly enjoying his classes and seems to be doing well in all of them. He works 4-10 p.m. Monday, Wed. and Friday and puts in extra hours at the end of the month as well. He has to really be disciplined to keep pace with it, but so far, so good. He and Shane Jenks teach a mission prep class in their

ward Sunday School and he said that it has been one of the most enjoyable things he has ever done. He and Janalee continue to date, time permitting, and it appears that she is putting aside her mission plans and giving their relationship a chance to grow.

Daddy found out that President Carmack is speaking at BYU-I next week and we are going to attend the devotional and visit for a minute with him. Hopefully we can see Tim and have some time to catch up on things then.

One of my assignments at school is to direct a Christmas cantata that the children will present in December. I have a 20-minute music time twice a week in which I have begun presenting the music. It has been such a fun experience to introduce the kids to some musical things and I feel like they are responding well. I'm hoping to convince Daddy to play his trumpet for them during one of my sessions. I know the kids would be awed by it!

[Dad] As time goes by I am feeling a little more on top of my new responsibilities. There is still an overwhelming amount of work to be done and things to learn but I am feeling more comfortable with it. Our District popcorn sale was successful and 20% more than last year. I have met with and trained each of the Stake Friends of Scouting Chairmen and we are getting ready for the council kickoff next week. I am trying to get the Stake's Pennies by the Inch campaign wrapped up, too. I am more intimately involved in the fund-raising process now than I was as an endowment director.

Monday night we went to Idaho Falls to join Becky and Chet for FHE. They needed some family pictures taken so we did the job with our digital camera. I am enjoying Maddie, Tate, and Larsen so much that it makes me wish for more time and closer proximity with the other grandkids. We have been blessed with a couple dozen of the sweetest, smartest, and cutest grandkids on the planet!

Tomorrow night is the council program meeting with district committees from every district in the council gathering at the Snake River Junior High. It is a great night of training, instruction, and sharing. The following day I will leave for Camp Kiesel, up the canyon east of Ogden for a couple of days of Wood Badge Course Director's Conference. Wood Badge is still one of my responsibilities and one of the things we do while there is selection of staff possibilities for the four weekend courses we are going to have next year.

That will amount to involvement of about 80 people.

The US News has an article this week about Dwight D. Eisenhower. I still remember lying in front of the big console radio and listening to election returns until he was declared the winner and President of the United States. This article is about his development as commander of the allied forces in Europe during WWII. One of his quotes written to his son, John, was worthy of note. *"I have observed very frequently that it is not the man who is so brilliant (who) delivers in time of stress and strain, but rather the man who can keep on going indefinitely, doing a good straightforward job."*

That quote has a lot of applications--from students in graduate school, to mothers with newborns, to those with church assignments, and so on. Many times the essence of life is keeping on keeping on. Love, DAD

October 29, 2002,

[Mom] This morning when I arrived at work, I was informed that Mrs. Anderson, the teacher that I'm an aide to, was going to be gone for the day. Yesterday her husband had a seizure and after having an MRI, it was discovered that he has a two-inch lesion in his brain and will have to have surgery. What a shock for their family. I guess about two years ago just prior to their wedding he had a seizure but after \$150,000 worth of tests, nothing was diagnosed and he has been all right until yesterday. I'm sure that this will be a tough time for them. Life certainly comes with no guarantees.

Last Wednesday during SaraKay's piano lesson, Linnea mentioned that Craig and Pat Barton's son-in-law, Patrick, had just passed away from cancer. I was stunned at the news and could think of little else for the balance of the week. I called David and Andrea since I knew that David and Patrick had served together in the stake mission presidency last year and had really enjoyed the association. Apparently, about four months ago it was discovered that he had a tumor on his spine which would have paralyzed him. Following surgery he was only given a few weeks to live and he passed away shortly thereafter, leaving Lori and two little girls. Craig and Patty have been living with them in Boise for the last little while, trying to help out where ever possible. It is certainly a tough thing for Lori who is Steve and David's age and young to be facing life as a widow.

Whenever I hear things like this I feel an increased gratitude for the health and safety that we have enjoyed as a family. I know that life can change overnight and that none of us are immune to these kinds of things. I guess we just have to be grateful for every good day and nurture the relationships with our loved ones so we have few regrets when tragedy strikes.

We had a nice surprise when Tim came home late Saturday night and spent Sunday with us. It gave us some good visiting time and a chance to find out how college, work, and his love life are coming along. College is challenging but he continues to enjoy his studies and feels confident that he is in the right field. Work gets demanding but except at the end of the month, his hours are manageable and he is doing well. Janalee is still uncertain as to her feelings and so it has Tim a little vexed at times, but these things have a way of working through and hopefully all the advice he got from us and from Becky and Chet on Friday night will help. It was a real treat to have him around for a few hours and have him attend our meetings with us.

Daddy left last Thursday for Utah and some Wood Badge training. SaraKay was invited to spend Friday night with a friend and for the first time in a long time, I had an evening to myself. I put on a Tom Clancy audio tape on my recorder, cleaned house, ate chicken nuggets, read the US New and World Report, and even watched some TV while I sipped a cup of hot chocolate. It wasn't until I climbed into bed about 11 that the house started to make funny noises and I got the heebee jeebees thinking there was someone out there in the dark. I was glad when I finally fell asleep and put my fears to rest.

We have missed having Grandpa and Grandma Larsen in Idaho Falls. We know that St. George is a great place to spend the winter, but we still miss the chance to see them occasionally. Alva Lu said that Grandpa is still struggling with his balance and fell several times last week, luckily never breaking any bones.

Grandma Richards is home from Moscow, ID and doing well. Last night when Daddy was updating the family directory, he asked if he should take Grandpa Arch's name off the roster. I have to admit that I felt a twinge of loneliness as I again realized that my dad's gone. It still doesn't seem real. I'm sure Grandma has experienced that same phenomena many times as she goes about her day. I know that Grandpa was ready to go and

I'm grateful that he was able to move ahead with his life after the confinement he felt for those years in the rest home. I just miss the chance to pick up the phone, chat with him awhile, and have him say, "I love you, Sis."

[Dad] Sue mentioned the Wood Badge training that I went to on Thursday. It was a Course Director's Conference to train future course directors. There were 22 courses for next year represented. We are changing over to all week-end courses of which we will have 4 next year—in June, July, August, and September. I am the staff advisor overseeing them all but have a special assignment to the one in June.

I really had my conviction of the inspiration behind Wood Badge confirmed as I observed the quality and conviction in all those attending and felt the Spirit. That group of about 100 individuals has the potential of touching the lives of at least 10,000 or more men and boys on a one-on-one basis over the next year. Who can measure the ripple effect for years to come?

Brad and Dantzelle Allen were there and it was good to visit with them again. He told a story of cooking breakfast at a camp out with the troop he is Scoutmaster to. One of the new boys was watching another boy cook pancakes and asked if he could cook a pancake. He had never cooked a pancake before. So, after some instruction, he happily cooked pancakes and became quite proficient as his confidence was building. Brad asked him if he wanted to cook an egg. He had never cooked an egg before—in fact he had never broken an egg. His confidence grew as he learned to fry an egg.

Then someone came running through the camp announcing the 5K run in five minutes. The boy took off in his heavy hiking boots and long pants ready to run the run as he queried over his shoulder, "Brother Allen, what is a 5K run?" An hour or so later he came back into camp beaming and announced he had taken 5th in the 5K run. Later, Brad found out there had only been 5 runners and it had taken his boy 48 minutes and 53 seconds—but he had finished the race and felt like a winner. He went home after that camp out a different boy. We can and do make a difference in the lives of men and boys!!!

I have been calling ward Primary presidents to check their lists of boys attending against the charter and boys that I have listed as being registered in order to find boys that may be missed. It is amazing to me how many boys are

from split homes, single-parent families, living with grandparents, and so on. My heart goes out to these little boys and I pray that Scouting may give them good role models and a source of friendship, safety, training in survival skills, and moral values that will help them make ethical decisions over their lifetimes.

November 5, 2002

[Mom] It's Sunday afternoon and I'm getting an early start on this letter. We had a sweet testimony meeting this morning and I was reminded again of the Lord's loving watch care over all his children. It is always faith-promoting to hear of prayers answered and lessons learned and to realize that if we are willing, the Lord will gently lead us along and help us become all that we should.

This past week was wild at school with all the preparations for Halloween and the excitement that precedes any holiday. The kids were really wired and anxious for all the festivities. I thought that the day after we would have 65 kids on a sugar high, but I think they wore themselves out and it turned out to be a pretty mellow day. With temperatures in the single digits on Thursday, the number of trick-or-treaters was considerably less and it made for a more relaxed evening. The only problem is that I bought enough candy for the annual "Trunk or treat" activity and for some reason, the ward didn't do it this year so we've got a bunch of candy that is haunting the three of us!

Work on Steph and Linds' new house continues to progress. They have agreed to do some of the interior painting and the tile floors when things are ready. Linds' brother from Tooele is going to work with them laying the tile since he knows what he is doing and is willing to help. They are still on schedule to be in by Christmas.

Little Arch is still having a rough time get adjusted. Shaunnie and Randy have tried everything they can think of and listened to advice from every quarter, but to no avail. When I called Shauntel today she said that they put him on soybean formula and that the last twelve hours have been better. They are hoping that maybe they have solved the problem and he will settle down. They just bought a digital camera and so hopefully we will get some pictures of him soon.

John and Laurel blessed Eliza today and were pleased to have Laurel's parents and her sister, Marsha, and family there to share the occasion. They said they would post some pictures soon.

Mike had a big week last week with six major tests. He said that he is feeling more confident in his skills and feels like he is able to do what's required. He has struck up a friendship with Angela, the new convert that we met while we were there visiting his branch, and he is impressed with her and hoping to ask her out. On Friday, after a week of tests, the dental association reserved a facility where there are all kinds of games including laser tag and treated all the dental students to a night out. He said that so many of the students spent the time drinking that only the LDS students showed up and so they all had plenty of time playing laser tag.

Tim and Janalee called it quits last week. It wasn't Tim's choice so he's had a heartache to deal with, but he's coping and getting along okay. He had his normal end-of-the-month rush at Melaleuca and didn't have much time to dwell on it and several of his roommates were experiencing similar situations so they had a party last night and went to the temple! Sounds like an appropriate way to regroup, count your blessings, look at the big picture, and seek the comfort of the Spirit.

[Dad] One day last week was spent delivering popcorn to the Bing Pow and Blackfoot Districts from their popcorn sale. We had a good increase from just under \$10,000 last year to nearly \$14,000 this year for the Blackfoot District. Another day was spent helping to inventory the Pocatello store. I have been making membership calls to Primary Presidents and getting geared up for the annual Friends of Scouting drive. We had the Council kickoff last Tuesday and had several inches of snow on our cars when we left the meeting that night. We had our meeting at the St. Bernard's Parrish Hall here in Blackfoot and it was interesting to contrast the cleanliness and business-like approach of the LDS Church with what I experienced there in scheduling and confirming our reservation.

We went to Clean Flicks on Friday night and signed up for a one-year membership and got "The Rookie" and "Gladiator". We watched "Rookie" that night together and thoroughly enjoyed it. Then I watched "Gladiator" on Saturday night alone and really enjoyed it.

We are getting ready for stake conference this coming weekend with a chapel session in the Temple on Thursday--and I am supposed to be the speaker to warm up the audience for the message from the Temple Presidency. On Saturday night I am to speak on why the Duty to God program and

Scouts. On Sunday, we will have two sessions of conference and recommend signing. And then next Sunday I have to speak at the Priesthood Preview for the boys turning twelve next year. Never a dull moment!!

November 12, 2002

[Dad] Well, today is Sue's birthday and I thought I would help out by starting on the family letter. She had to speak at a Young Women's thing tonight but she heard from several of the kids--even David from Puerto Rico (he is there on business) before leaving. Sunday was our stake conference meetings--two sessions with four wards assigned to come at 9:00 and four to come at 12:00. We had priesthood leadership that morning at 7:00. I had pretty light duty--conducting the leadership meeting and presenting the names in the stake business. We had wonderful meetings with President and Sister Richardson, the new IF temple president and his wife, President Dirk Driscoll representing the mission, Aaron Moon, Sister Barnard--Stake Primary President, President Van Orden and President Shipley speaking. I spoke briefly at the Chapel session in the temple on Thursday night and then on Saturday night President Shipley asked me to talk about "Why the Duty to God Program" and "Why Scouting." I am attaching my notes for that talk even though you would need a little fleshing out of stories to get the full impact. I received many compliments on my talk that night. Each of the other speakers really nailed their subjects and the conference was a great experience.

We had our Holiday Auction in Pocatello on Friday night and I was so grateful for the help of SaraKay and Sue. There is a lot of work attached to that project involving standing and walking around carrying and sorting items and we were all beat by the time the night was over. It was a great success with about a 20% increase over last year. This Friday is the auction in Idaho Falls, but I am going to the opening of Harry Potter II in Logan with SaraKay and the Bennion's instead. Sue is staying home to babysit the Seely kids while Chet and Becky go on little get-away.

[Mom] I have had so many presentations lately that I've been overwhelmed and had to put everything aside until after last night. I had studied so hard for it and felt frustrated when it didn't fall into place very easily, but eventually I got it put together and felt good about it.

The weekend was a big one with the auction, stake conference, and all the assignments that go

with that. We had a dinner between the two sessions of conference and fed about twenty people. We served baked potatoes and toppings and it was nice although the hour between sessions doesn't give much time for a leisurely lunch. It is always a thrill to associate with the members of the presidencies who come to our conferences and it puts me in mind of the times I remember conference visitors coming to stay when Grandpa Larsen was stake president. I'm sure Daddy remembers the days when he visited other stakes as a member of the Boise Idaho Mission and got to hobnob with some VIP's. Daddy did a wonderful job on his talks and received good feedback. It's been a very sweet experience to see him grow in his position in the presidency. He is respected and loved.

November 20, 2002

[Mom] The past week was a busy one. It doesn't seem possible that in a week we will be celebrating Thanksgiving. We still aren't exactly sure who is coming but we'll be glad to take whoever can come. We are especially looking forward to having Tim home for a few days. We haven't had much time with him since his return from his mission. He has a lot of homework that he'll be working on and then he has work Friday and Saturday so we still won't see much of him but even a day will be fun.

Steph and Linds started installing their tile this week. Linds' brother is there working and coaching them and they hope it will be completed in a timely fashion. I know that they have been grateful that the weather has been pleasant since their outside brick was delivered last week and is needing to be laid.

SaraKay and Daddy went to Logan last Friday to attend the new Harry Potter movie with the Bennion's and Larsen's. From all I've heard, it was better than HP #1, although scarier. Rachel had read the books so she was prepared, but it was pretty scary for Nathan. Moral: It's a great show but probably not a good choice for the younger bunch.

Saturday morning Daddy had "Scouting for Food" and spent until four that afternoon distributing the foods that were collected. It is always heart-warming to see people's generosity. It is certainly a big project and one that seems to be supported by the community as a whole.

Becky and Chet took an anniversary trip last weekend and we took care of the three

munchkins while they were gone. It always gives SaraKay a feel for what it's like to have siblings. She was really good to help me and do a lot of the leg work. Although we got along pretty good, I am reminded of why the Lord sends babies to young couples and not retired ones. I forget how physically draining it is to care for little ones. I kept marveling at how well Tate is doing. It's so hard to believe that just a little over a year ago it wasn't known whether he would ever be able to walk and talk and now he is right in the thick of things, and progressing by leaps and bounds.

One last comment. Last week I did a presentation on the American flag to the students at the Charter school. I wore my scout uniform which I used at scout camp and tried to look the part of a true scout. Well, the response was wonderful. The children were so amazed to see me in uniform and I was fielding questions all day about my involvement and why I got to wear the uniform. Two boys who I have kind of taken under my wing were especially interested and ask me if they could be in my scout troop. I told them that I would need to send some information home with them and they would need to talk to their dad about it. They were so excited and I was excited, too, because I know a little of their history and I know that they would really benefit from the scouting experience. Their father is an atheist and an alcoholic but he has custody of the boys (twins Cade and Mason) and he is very protective of them.

Well, as fate would have it, later that morning, who should come to the school just as the twins were going out to recess but Mr. Kalisz. I was walking down the hall and the twins grabbed me and took me to their father and insisted that I talk with him. Well, the minute I began my recruitment speech, he told me that he knew all about scouts and that he was raised on scouting but that no boys of his were going to go to "no damned Mormon church house" for scouts and that was that.

I felt so sorry for the boys as they stood there, crestfallen and embarrassed. Fortunately, I knew enough about the programs in Blackfoot to inform him that there were three non-LDS packs in Blackfoot and one of them met in a nearby Lutheran church. He was noticeably surprised and admitted that they lived less than one quarter block away. He left and I supposed that my efforts had been in vain.

Well, today as I was working on a project with Cade, he informed me that last night he had gone to a pack meeting at the nearby church and had a great time! Later today when Daddy returned from work, he mentioned that the pack leader for that group had come into the scout office and told him that Mr. Kalizs, Cade, Mason, and two friends had all come to their pack meeting and they were all going to join! It made my day! I've promised them that I will sew on their patches when they get their shirts since they don't have help at home.

[Dad] Isn't it wonderful to be alive!?! We are so blessed to be on the earth at this time and to enjoy the fruits of our ancestor's sacrifices. I love the associations I have in my Church service and am so buoyed up by those that I serve with. It is a joy to be able to interview and visit with the saints on a one-to-one basis. The Church is true and inspired! We are led by prophets that are so in tune with the times and the needs of the members world-wide!

We sure enjoyed Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. In one of the closing scenes, Professor Dumbledore said to Harry, *"It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."*

A great thought! I used that quote in my talk at our stake Priesthood Preview--a Primary program for all boys turning 12 during this next year. I also referred to Elder Ballard's talk at the General Priesthood session and challenged them to prepare for receiving the priesthood by doing the things Elder Ballard challenged the young men with. One additional thing that I did was to refer to my Priesthood Line of Authority with only 8 steps to the Savior as a source of power.

There are always frustrations with work, but by and large I am excited and challenged by it and relish in being able to more directly see the effects in the lives of young people of the efforts we make as a council to extend the Scouting program to more youth. This morning I met with representatives of the Juvenile Probation department about establishing a Scout unit to help them with the youth on probation and they were excited about the resources that would be available to assist. I then went to Shelley High School and met with 13 youth interested in a law enforcement crew sponsored by the Shelley Police Department. I wish there was some way of getting the mundane paper work of rechartering and counting and auditing Friends of Scouting money

done by some secretarial kind of person so I could just handle the relationships side of things.

We had a very successful Scouting for Food project and were able to gather nearly 450,000 cans of food throughout the council. Blackfoot came through with about 35,000 cans. Our collection point was St Vincent de Paul and we almost filled a large room they have for storage. It was fun to take boys and their parents through the facility and show them how much good they had been a part of as they distributed bags or helped with gathering them.

November 27, 2002

[Mom] Hopefully all of you received Dave and Andrea's letter and read that we are going to Boise for Thanksgiving. Originally, we were going to go visit them in December and catch one of Laurel and Angela's choir concerts, but after visiting with them we decided that now is a better time. I called Becky and she and Chet were sweet about deferring until another time. Today Becky called and mentioned that one of the kids is sick and maybe it was a good thing that they didn't plan to go very far for the holiday. Anyway, we will be leaving early Thursday morning and returning Friday.

I really appreciated all the sweet family letters that have been written these last few weeks. It means so much to have each of you check in and let us know how life is going for you. Our thoughts and prayers will be with all of you who are traveling tomorrow for the holiday. Have a safe trip and be careful!

The last few days have been harried at school. In order to get ready for our parent concert, I have about 20-minutes practice time in the morning and then another 20 right after lunch. It has been interesting to see the gradual transition that is taking place in my music class. The first few times I had to have a teacher ride shotgun to help control the kids and I felt like it was pulling teeth to get them to sing. Now everyone comes to class (65 students) and there is hardly a child that isn't responsive and trying to participate. I've tried to have a good variety of songs and some rousing ones along with the spiritual ones in the Christmas cantata that we are performing. Along with the cantata I have lined up performances with a rest home and at State Hospital South. We are enjoying singing the children favorite songs for those performances and it's been fun to have a break from all the new songs we have rehearsed for the cantata. The wonderful thing is that all the

taboos about teaching about Christ or prayer or anything else spiritual are removed because of the charter we function under and it's been so nice to feel like I don't have to wear a gag regarding religion, patriotism and other values near and dear to me.

One of the truly amazing things that I have had reaffirmed is how very precious every child is and how impressionable they are at this age. My two little Kalizs twins continue to respond to my friendship. The other day I gave them a bunch of old Boys Life magazines to read and you would have thought that I had given them the Golden Plates. Monday when we were singing a song, I had one of them come up to hold the word poster for me. He was standing at my side and I was about to begin and he whispered to me, "Mrs. Larsen, is it okay if my dad buys me a tan scout shirt instead of the dark blue one? (As if we were alone having a casual conversation or something) I assured him that I would find time to address his questions before the day was over and we got into our singing. I thought it truly was an indication of how grateful and eager they are for scouting in their lives! It makes me smile every time I think of it!

Saturday morning Daddy and I attended a festival duet recital with SaraKay. She and three high school students had practiced long and hard on two pianos with Linnea hovering over them to perfect a number by Bach that was gorgeous. I was so excited to hear it performed and when they all got up and went to the pianos I could hardly wait! By the second note played I realized that something was terribly wrong and I sat cringing as the piece progressed. All at once Linnea stepped forward from the back of the room and in her calm voice said, "Girls, please start over." Their second attempt was a winner and they progressed to the close of the number with hardly a hitch. "Whew!" What a relief!

Daddy, who had never heard it before that morning later commented that when they first began he thought it sounded a bit strange, but, of course, having never heard it before, he figured he just didn't know what to listen for.

I guess it reminded him of a Shostakovich number that SaraKay has been working on for the past few months. It is a modern, pounding piece that leaves our teeth on edge each time we hear it. We have a standing joke that after she has played it, SaraKay says, "How did that sound?" and we yell, "Terrible!" and she says, "Thank you." Anyway, we

are adjusting to the discordant sound and learning to appreciate modern composers a little more.

Daddy's work is really demanding but I continue to see things that convince me that this district has never been in better hands! He is doing a great job and appreciated by people all over the districts he is supervising. (By the way, don't forget that it is his birthday next Sunday the eighth.

I'm doing a merit badge presentation next Tuesday for the ward scouts and starting to gather information for my annual ward history that I hand in the middle of January. Right now life is crazy but I know the Lord is blessing us and each of you and hopefully he feels like I am doing all I can to give Him my best effort. My role as mother, my work with the school children, my Gospel doctrine job and all these little extras bring me such satisfaction (granted, some stress) and make my life rich and full. And of course, then there are each of you who are a constant source of joy and pride to Daddy and me. You are the light of our lives and a treasure. Let me not forget to mention Grandma Ilene and Grandpa and Grandma Larsen. We are grateful for their health and vitality and for the righteousness of their lives! We are so blessed. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Love, Mom

[Dad] I could just conclude with a resounding "amen" to the closing paragraph! But I won't. I have been enjoying my work—I finally feel like I know who is doing what and when and that I can and do make a difference. According to Ben Hansen, who runs the Blackfoot store, people like me and what I am doing and know that if I say I will do something, it will get done.

Since stake conference it seems like some of the pressure has been off as far as my Church calling is concerned. I have enjoyed the interviewing and counseling and feel like our emphasis on the Melchizedek Priesthood and the High Council is starting to pay off with things happening in most of the wards—visits being made, home teaching assignments being changed according to who can best meet the needs, challenges to prepare for the temple, etc. It seems like we are doing a better job of ministering in our meetings by attending to the needs of individuals and families rather than just calendaring and administering.

Last Friday we went to Know Your Religion for the first time in many, many years. We were expecting Vaughn J. Featherstone and so were a lot of other people. However, his call to be President of the

Logan Temple took precedence over his KYR assignment and so we had a substitute. He is a teacher in the Institute at Utah State and did a great job talking about repentance. He started out with a slide of page 25 from "Miracle of Forgiveness" with a listing of sins of commission and it went downhill from there. He reminded us that repentance was not optional for salvation, it is not stopping the sin, it is not a check list. Repentance involves a change of heart, turning to God and away from sin, feeling responsible, feeling bad with Godly sorrow, changing direction and our natural inclination, choosing to change by choosing Christ, and shaking at the appearance of sin. He told us that the binding of the "Miracle of Forgiveness" is red and the rest is white to remind us that though our sins be as scarlet they may be as the driven snow.

December 4, 2002

[Mom] Sunday during choir practice I heard one of the women say, "I've had a wonderful holiday weekend, but I need another day to recover from all our celebrating." I agreed. We, too, had a great Thanksgiving weekend, but by Sunday night I didn't feel quite ready to get back to work and all the preparations for Christmas.

On Thursday we left by seven and arrived in Boise four hours later. The weather was clear, the roads were dry, and we enjoyed the chance to visit with Tim who arrived home from Rexburg about seven on Wednesday night. He was scheduled to work until ten but there were so few customers calling in their orders, that Melaleuca sent some of the employees home early. It gave him a chance to catch his breath (and do up his laundry) before we left the next morning for Dave and Andrea's.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time with the Larsen's of Boise. They had prepared a delicious turkey with all the trimmings and we ate until we couldn't eat another bite! Following dinner the kids played tennis, and then David took the bunch for a long walk while Andrea and I relaxed and visited. When the group returned, we played games, ate pie, and visited some more. On Friday morning we held a short piano recital and gave SaraKay, Laurel, and Anna Sue a chance to perform some of their pieces for us. We then spent some time singing Christmas carols and other choir music that Andrea has collected over the years. It is always rewarding for Daddy and I to see that our posterity is establishing musical traditions of their own. It has certainly been an important part of our lives over the years.

Andrea mentioned in her family letter that Joseph will be having surgery on December 9th. It is to correct a condition that causes his eyes to function separately. It sounds like the same condition that Becky had her surgery for when she was about two years old. I imagine it will be done with a laser and his recovery time will be shorter. He will go in on Monday and if all goes well, he may even be released that night. I'm sure they would appreciate your faith and prayers in his behalf.

Speaking of surgery, I was visiting with Linda the other day and she mentioned that Mindy and Roger's son, Connor, had surgery at Primary Children's Hospital last week and will be there for the next three weeks. It involved his legs although I'm not sure the exact nature of the surgery. Between Roger's sister who is visiting from Canada and Linda, they are taking care of the other children while Mindy stays in Salt Lake. We certainly wish them the best and pray that all will go well.

We had a chance on Friday evening to see Mark and Rita who were visiting their kids in Rexburg for Thanksgiving. We were delighted for the chance to see them again. We also enjoyed the chance to catch up on news with Jessica, JoEllen, and the newlyweds, Josh and Jeanette. We kind of keep track of their family through Josh and Jeanette since they are often home visiting the Watsons.

My sister, Deniece, and family will be arriving in Rexburg about December 17-18 where they are renting a home while Don finishes up his Bachelor Degree. In June they will move to Provo where he will work on his Masters. It will be fun to have them a little closer. I've invited Grandma Ilene to spend Christmas with us this year. I'm sure this first Christmas without Grandpa will be a little lonely. I know that Kathy always includes her as does her brother, Don, when these special occasions come around. Grandma is still uncertain just what she'll do. She worries about the weather and bad roads even if she isn't doing the driving.

Sunday night we were invited for dinner at Becky and Chet's. They wanted us to help them with leftovers (another great turkey feast!) and see the tree they brought down out of the mountains on Friday. They got a permit to cut one and took the three kids and hiked up into the mountains until they found one they liked. Bringing it down proved quite a task since they had Maddie and Tate

trudging along with them and they were carrying Larsen in a backpack carrier as well. Becky said that they were quite a sight! When they arrived home from their excursion, they discovered that the 12' tree they had cut down really turned out to be closer to 24' and they could hardly fit it in their family room! All and all it turned out to be a sweet experience and they are already making plans to do it again next year, weather permitting.

We received a cute letter and pictures from Paul and Jenny of the Michigan gathering and it made us happy to know that everything turned out so well. I kept thinking about three babies and wondering if any house would be big enough to accommodate that kind of a group at night. Apparently, everyone survived it and got along great!

[Dad] When I got home last night I was just in time for scripture time. We have been doing our best to respond to our Bishop's challenge to complete the Book of Mormon together as a family before the end of the year. To make it we are now reading four pages per night. We have enjoyed this challenge and have grown to love the Book of Mormon even more as we have read out loud to each other. Another part of the challenge was having family prayer morning and night. As you know we have always been pretty regular with our morning family prayers but not very good with having them at night. As we conclude each scripture time at night with family prayer together it has been another sweet dimension to our spiritual and family relationships. With only three of us at home our turn to pray comes around pretty frequently.

Sue was in her Scout uniform from her presentation to our troop and some other boys regarding the Family Life Merit Badge. She feels that the uniform gives her a little more credibility and presence when meeting with Scouts. I agree--and think she looks cute in her uniform. I love a girl in uniform (well, a particular one anyhow)!!

Sue pretty much covered the subject of our Thanksgiving weekend. It was a real treat and it seemed so unusual to not have the usual pressures on Wednesday night and Thursday morning of getting ready for the big dinner. That was the first Thanksgiving for many years that I have not been the carver of the turkey.

Work has been busy and full of pressures with rechartering for three districts, running a fundraising campaign in one district and getting ready in the other two, keeping things moving with

the Venturing committee, and organizing new units, and getting popcorn money in.

I just wanted to end with a short quote that I ran across from William Jordan, a writer around the turn of the last century (20th): *"Being hypersensitive to the opinions others have of us, puts us into the false position of making their approval our court of appeals instead of our own conscience and self-respect."* What a great thought!

December 13, 2002

[Mom] I visited with David tonight and got the latest update on Joseph. He had surgery on Monday and by Monday night they were able to bring him home. It was rather disconcerting for Andrea to see him in recovery, with tubes running in and out, and to see his big tears, mixed with blood, running down his cheeks. She said that he was in quite a bit of pain at first but the medication they gave him really made him hyper so they got something else that didn't affect him so much. Today he seems to be doing much better except for the blood-red whites of his eyes that will take a while to clear up. Although there have been a lot of improvements over the years in eye care, apparently the surgery that Joseph had was performed the same way as when Becky had it over 25 years ago. I'm sure that Dave and Andrea would appreciate your continuing faith and prayers in Joseph's behalf.

SaraKay and I just returned from the Charter school's Christmas Concert. It went better than I could ever have wished for! We performed a children's cantata which included eight songs. They were all original songs and so it involved a lot of memorizing and practices. There were times when I wasn't sure we were going to be ready, but it went off with only one small hitch and the kids really did come through. It was very satisfying to see my efforts rewarded. One of the nice things I did was to make poinsettia corsages for the girls and a red ribbon tie for the boys. I had them arrive early and between the bunch of us we put a flower or tie on each child and that gave us an opportunity to make a fuss over them as well as having the choir look very classy. I was able to borrow some chimes from the Blackfoot school district and one of the students played them during two of the songs which added a lot. We had a costumed portrayal on the stage of the story we were telling in song, and that gave some of the kids the chance to participate in that as well. It's

nice to have it over and relax a little now and focus on Christmas at the Larsen's.

Our ward party was last night and we had an enormous group of ward members participate. It was especially gratifying to see the number of neighbors and friends who attended who normally do not participate in any other church activities. I could tell that other ward members were doing their best to make them feel welcome and at ease.

Sunday night was our stake choir festival. It was thrilling to hear from every choir in the stake and to share in the season through beautiful Christmas music. SaraKay joined the choir about a month ago and it has been fun to take her with us to choir practice. Several of her friends also joined and so she feels right at home. She is accompanying one of Linnea's girls' choirs at the Jr. High Christmas concert next week and that has been a challenging experience for her.

We are looking forward to having some family home for Christmas. We hope to make a quick trip next weekend down through Logan and then on to Salt Lake to pick up Mike and maybe Grandma Richards for the holiday. Our thoughts are with those of you who are away.

Daddy's workload has been terrific these last few weeks and he is busy tonight auditing several FOS packets.

[Dad] Work has been busy with Friends of Scouting, rechartering, Venturing Committee, Wood Badge preparations for next year, District Meetings for Wolverine, Blackfoot and Bing Pow, recruiting manpower, and developing relationships. I always enjoy feeling like I am serving and I have plenty of opportunities for that in my current role.

Thanks for the calls for my birthday. It is hard to believe that I am 59 years old. Someone said that anyone over 50 who wakes up without any aches and pains is dead. So, in some ways I feel my age physically, but I still think like I'm 40.

Last Friday we went to Rexburg and took Tim out to eat at KFC, did some Christmas shopping in Rexburg and Idaho Falls, and then rented a video—Sum of All Fears—a Tom Clancy story which we really enjoyed. That was my birthday celebration. Sunday was full of meetings, interviews, and choir concert. That is the beginning of Christmas for me—to hear all the choirs in our stake sing some of their favorite Christmas songs. It is wonderful to see how the choirs have grown since Sue started

the annual tradition when she was stake music chair. We had between 4-500 there.

December 17, 2002

[Mom] Last night there were six of you on chat....the most we have had in a long time. I think it was because Christmas is coming and we all feel the need to be together even if it's only on chat. I have to admit that it did make me a little sad, knowing that we won't be seeing some of you for the holidays.

I've had a busy day today, but things are starting to come together and I'm relieved that much of the shopping and cooking is over. Although each year we try to simplify, it is hard to know how. There is always the list of neighbors, members and non, H.T, V.T, and those whom we visit, co-workers, music teachers, stake presidency members, etc. Daddy, SaraKay, and I have become quite proficient at making pecan logs, wrapping them up, and getting them ready for delivery. It's a nice gift to give and always appreciated.

We are making plans for our quick trip to Logan and S.L. this weekend. Steph said the house is about finished and we're pleased to get to see it when we visit them. Mike is flying in to S.L. on Thursday and hopefully will have someone who can pick him up.

We'll arrive at Grandma's Saturday morning after spending the night with Steve and Bonnie and then bring Mike and Grandma home with us, weather permitting. We are getting so excited to have our company arrive!

I know that this is a big week for you students and our prayers are with you. I am always grateful that I don't have to compete in today's world. I admire all of you who have completed your schooling and I can only imagine the pressures that Jenny, Paul, Mike, and Tim are feeling right now with finals. The wonderful thing is that you don't have to labor over your studies during the Christmas break. Yippee!

SaraKay found out yesterday that she had been picked to play on a co-ed basketball team which Troy Goodwin is coaching. Today at school she found out that the other girl that was selected to play on the team has decided not to participate and so SaraKay is going to be the only female member of the team. She is feeling a little funny about it but I told her not to let fear keep her from taking advantage of the chance to hone her skills. Practicing with this bunch of boys will help her

prepare for next year when she'll be trying out for the school team. She practices every night on our private court and is trying to be ready when they start practicing in January. The really exciting news is that her "dream boy" is also on the team!

I just visited with David about Joseph and he said that much of the redness is gone and his eyes are looking better every day. They are relieved to have him on the mend. Andrea's mom, Laurel, will be arriving on Thursday to spend Christmas with them and they are looking forward to that.

I need to call Grandma Richards tomorrow and find out if Don and Deniece arrived safely. They were due to arrive in Rexburg either today or tomorrow and get moved in. What an enormous change for them after living in Ohio for the last 20 years! We are looking forward to having them a little closer.

Daddy is in the dining room working on more scouting audits but he seems to be keeping on top of the many demands made on him. I so appreciate his foresight in putting money aside throughout the year so that when the financial demands of Christmas hit us, we have the resources to do what we need to do. I remember many years when that wasn't the case.

[Dad] Yes, we truly are blessed—and you are the primary blessing! We love and appreciate each of you and appreciate the good things we see happening in your lives because of your adherence to covenants.

For several years the savings in our Christmas Fund came from my insurance renewals, but they have diminished to just about nothing and I have to save a little from each check to be able to have what we need. It is a real blessing to have a good job in these tumultuous times!

Sunday was filled with the usual meetings. I decided to visit a couple of other sacrament meetings and visited Riverside First Ward. John and Bonnie Moon were talking about tithing and did a great job. Aaron is faithful and committed, but still paying the price for some of his earlier decisions. He is the Scoutmaster in that ward and does a great job. Their youngest two sons seem sweet and obedient and were both involved in passing the sacrament.

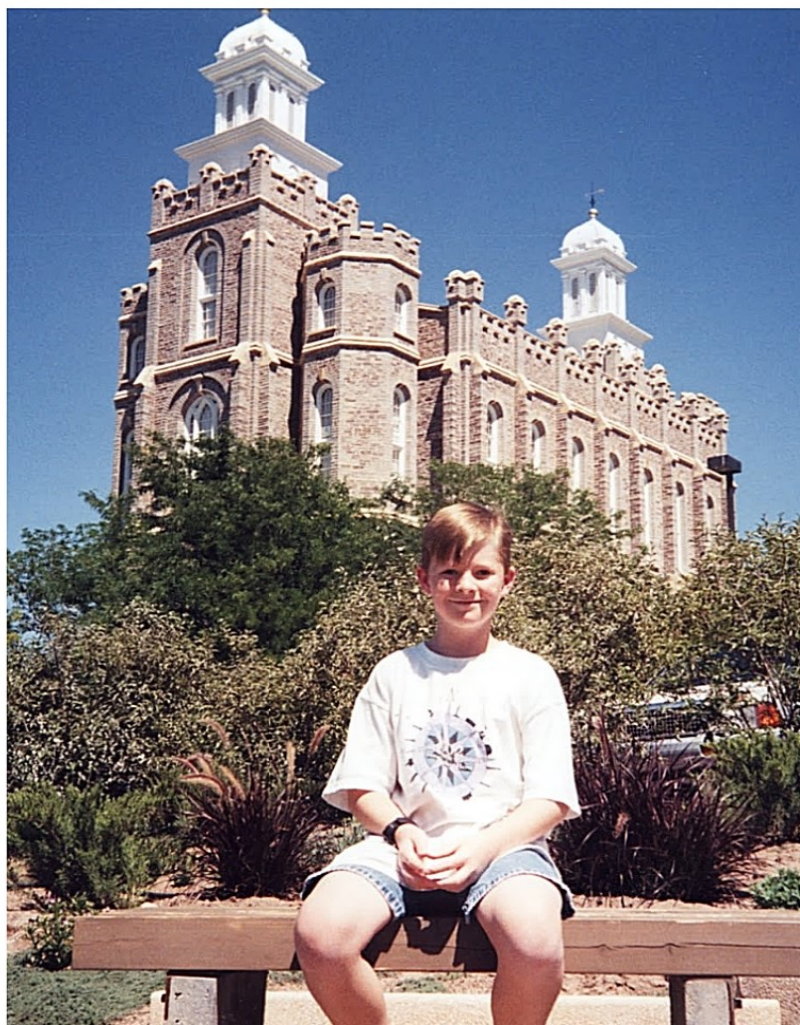
We had choir practice and then I went to YMYW Correlation. We are doing a humanitarian project with each ward making up kits and then loading everything on a semi and sending it to SLC. We were going to take the kids down on buses the

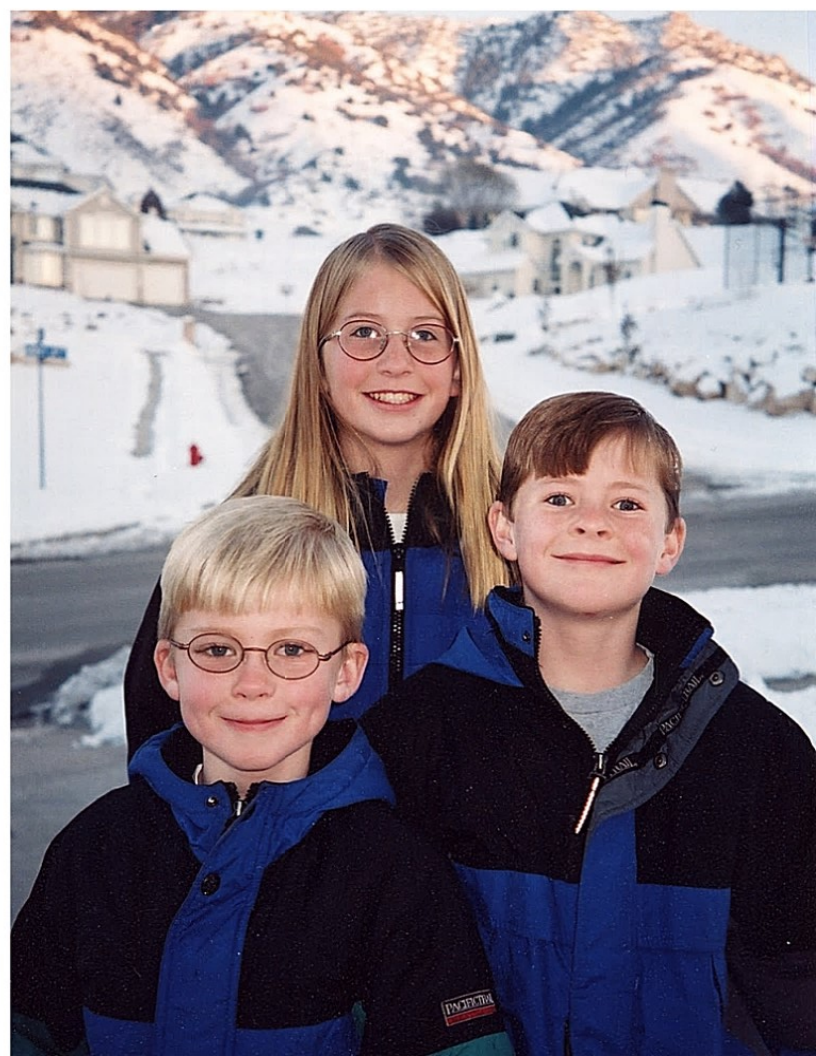
first of June to unload the semi and work in the Humanitarian Center but the area presidency requested that we not do that, so we are scrambling to come up with an alternate activity within a closer radius.

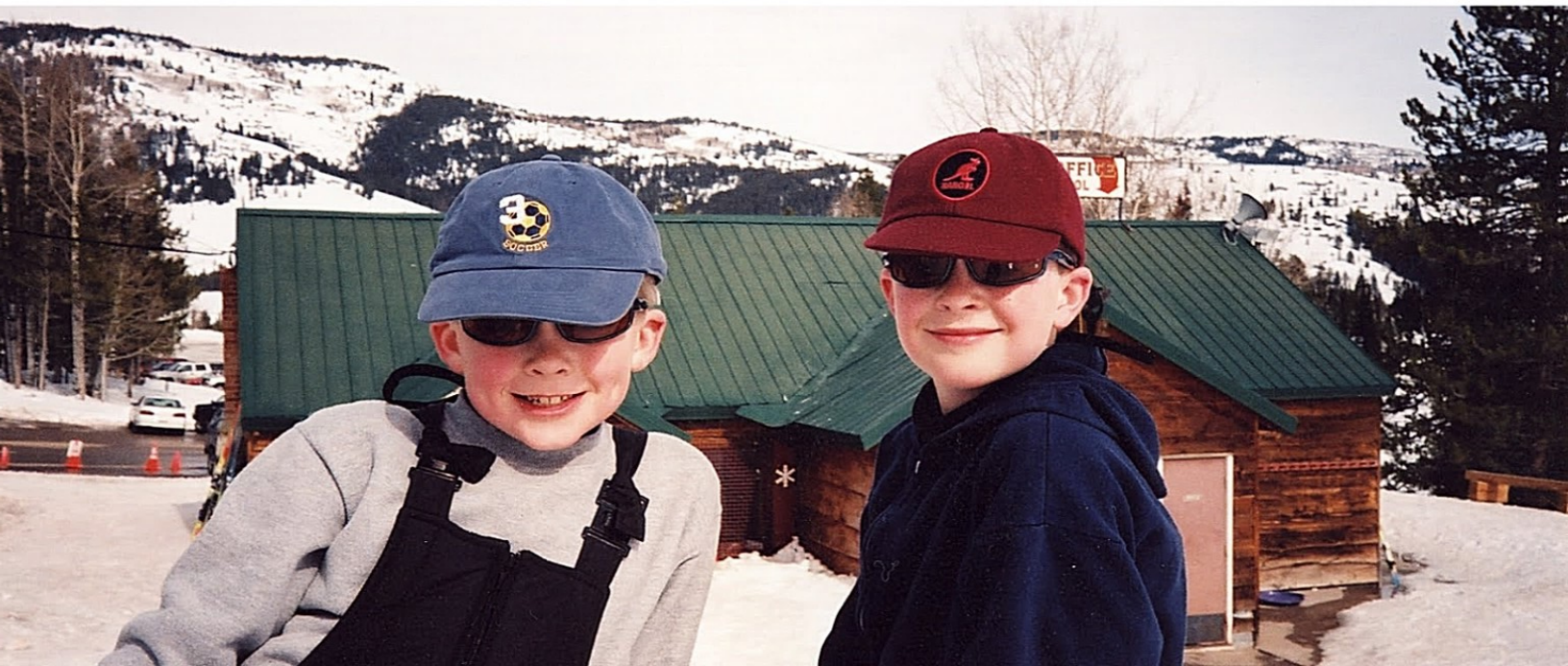
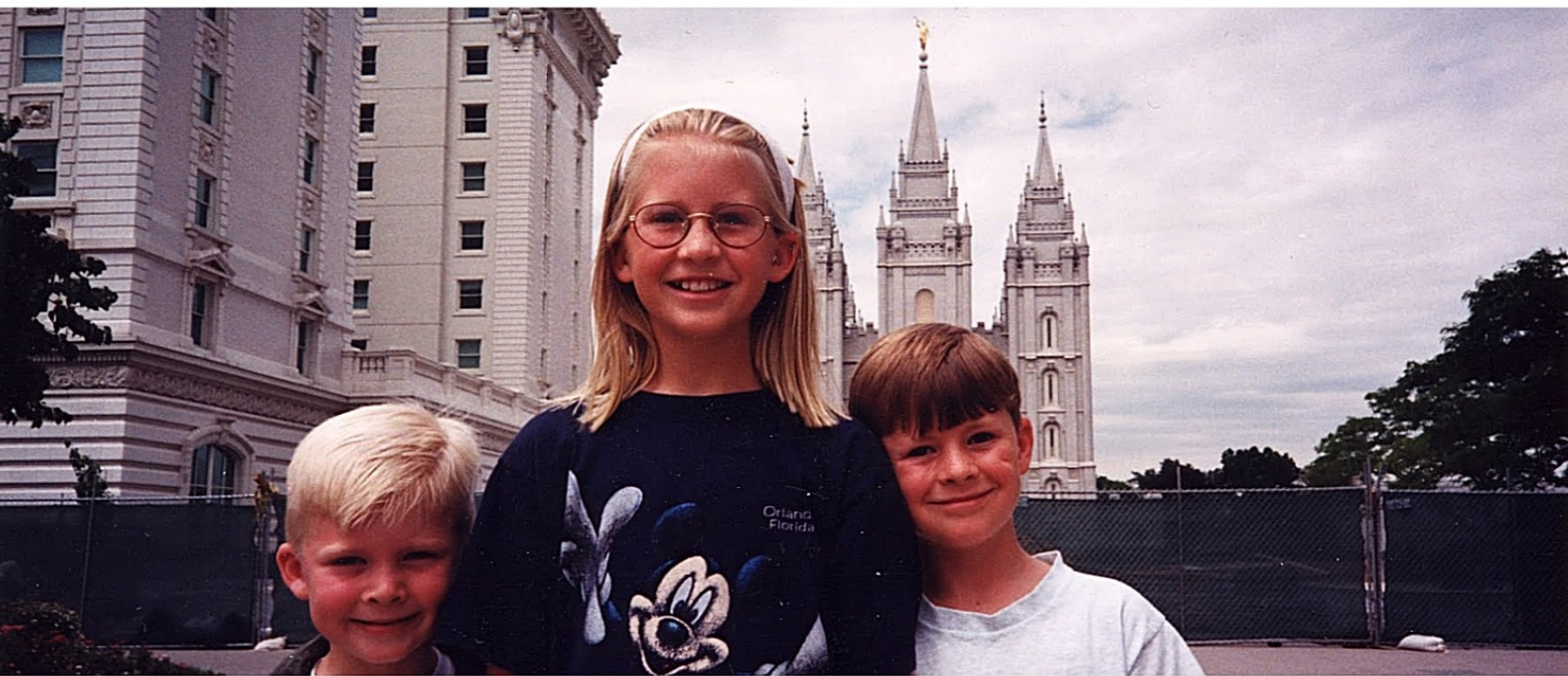
We thoroughly enjoyed chat with so many of you present. It was fun to take our pecan logs around to the stake presidency and clerks. I remembered helping Dad put together boxes of potatoes and delivering them to his counselors and clerks.

Saturday was another full day as I audited charters and prepared a bunch of reports for Monday's staff meeting. Then we went to Pocatello to do some final Christmas shopping. It was a bad day for that—I have never seen the mall and its parking lot so full. While in Pocatello we went to an open house that one of my co-workers does each year. He and his wife are great cooks and they always have lots of good things to eat—so we went out for supper that night.



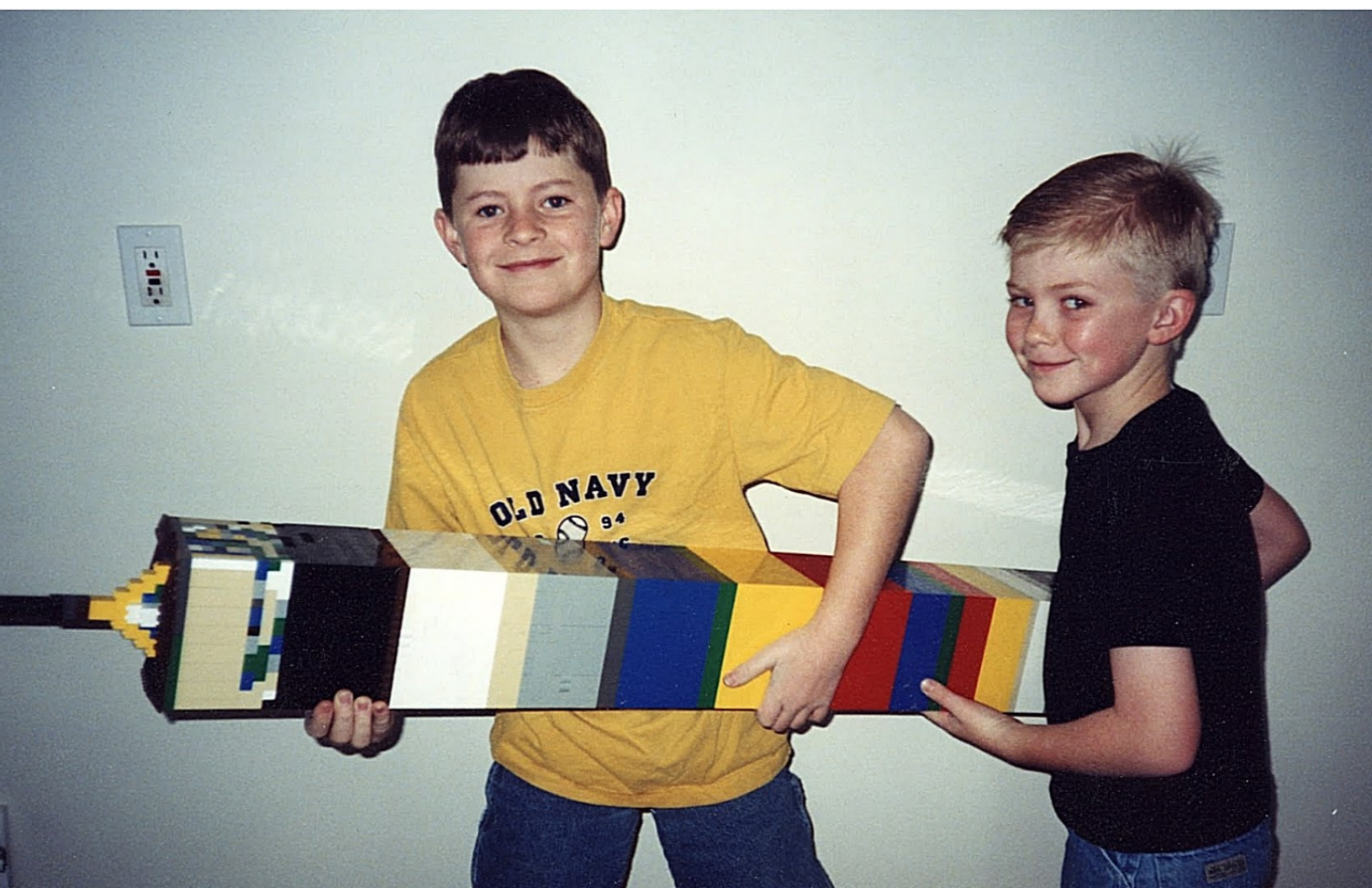










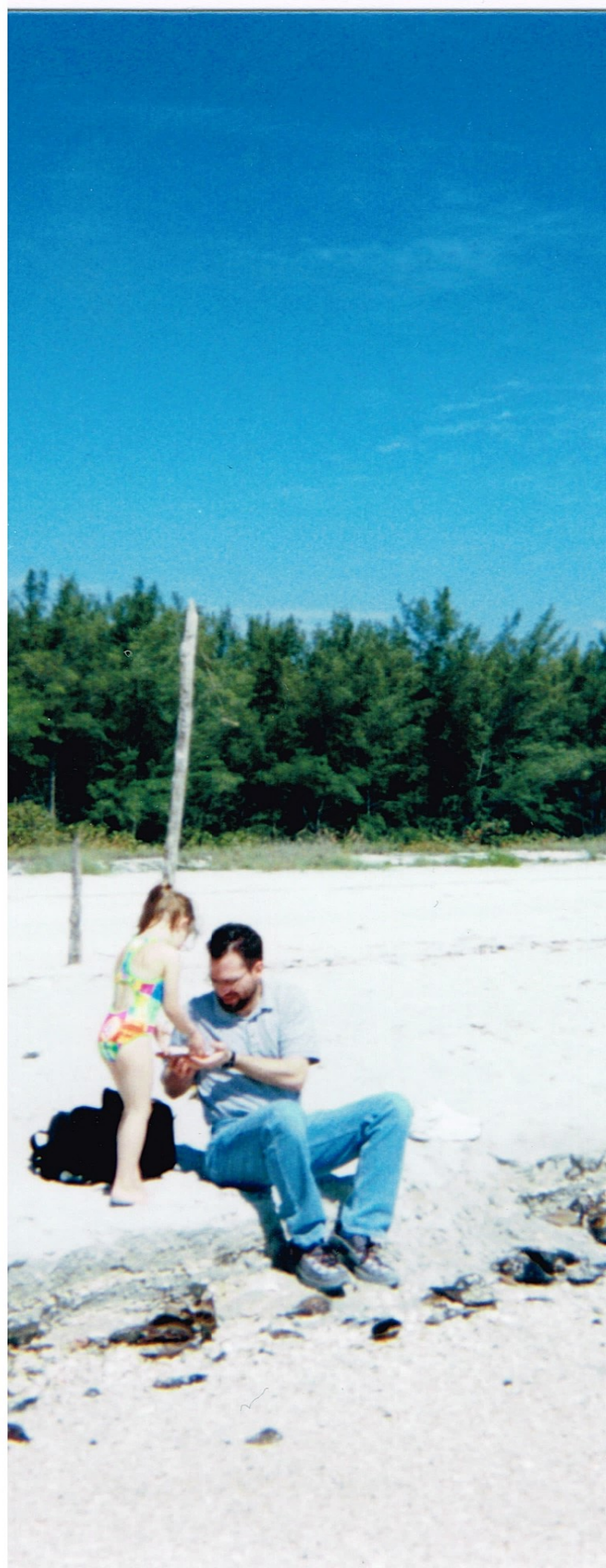






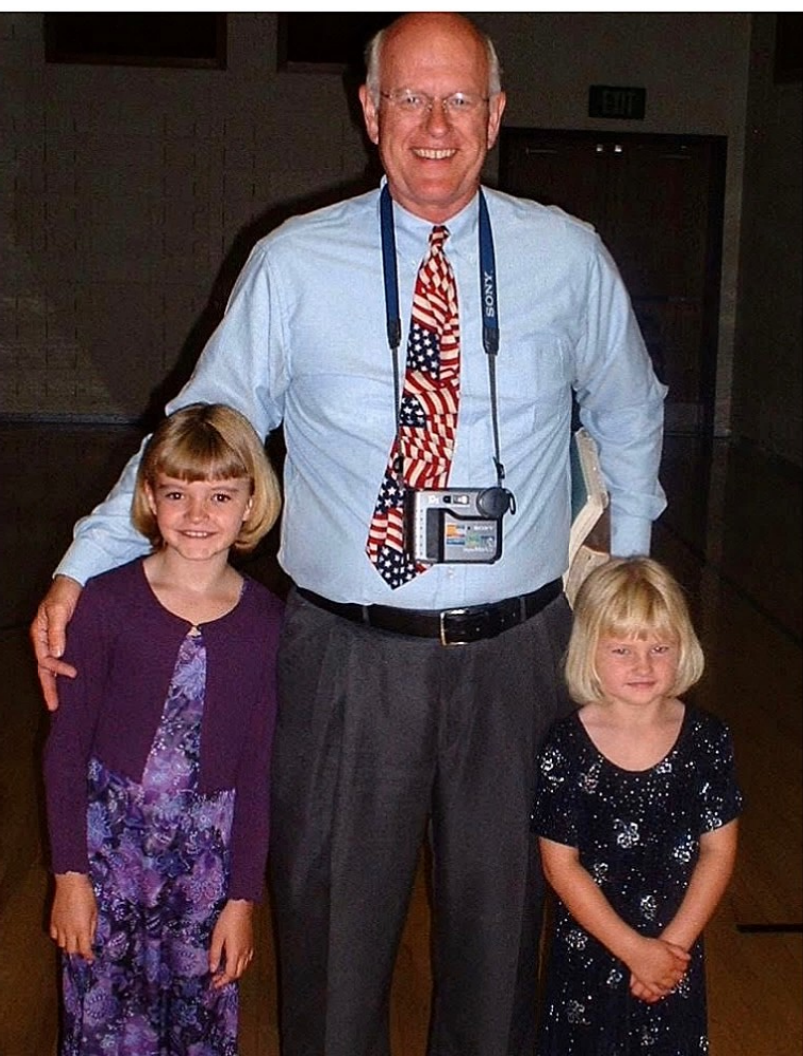
























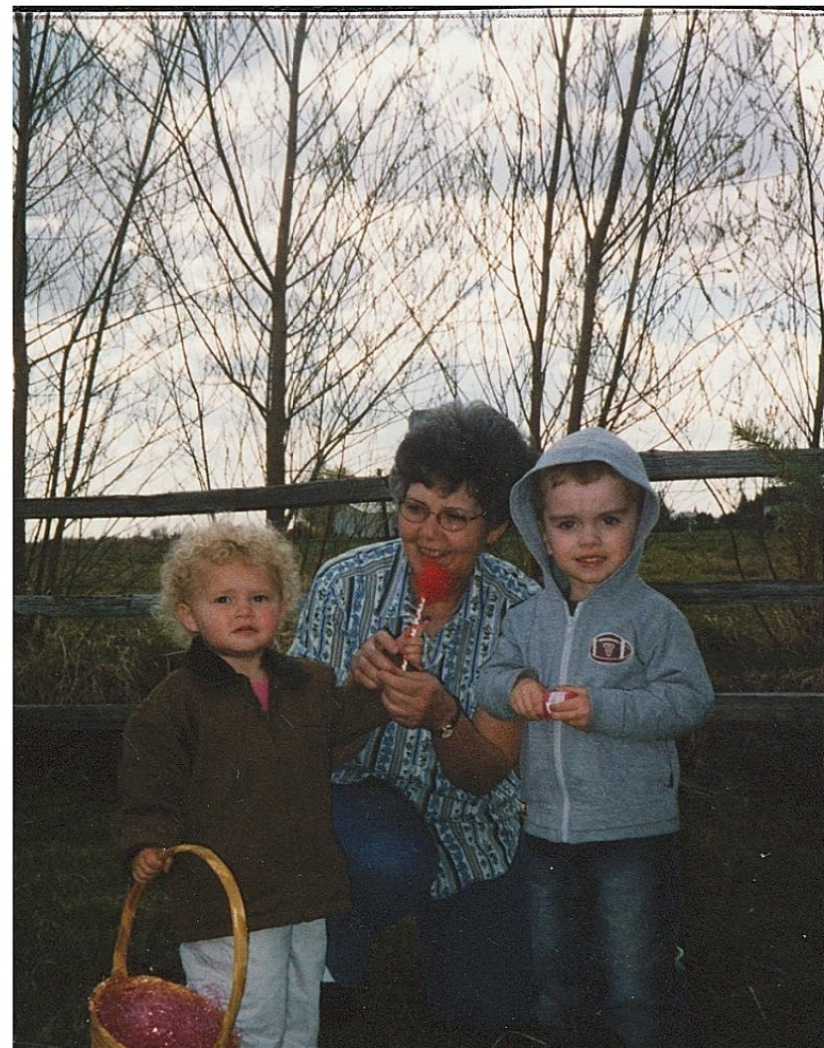


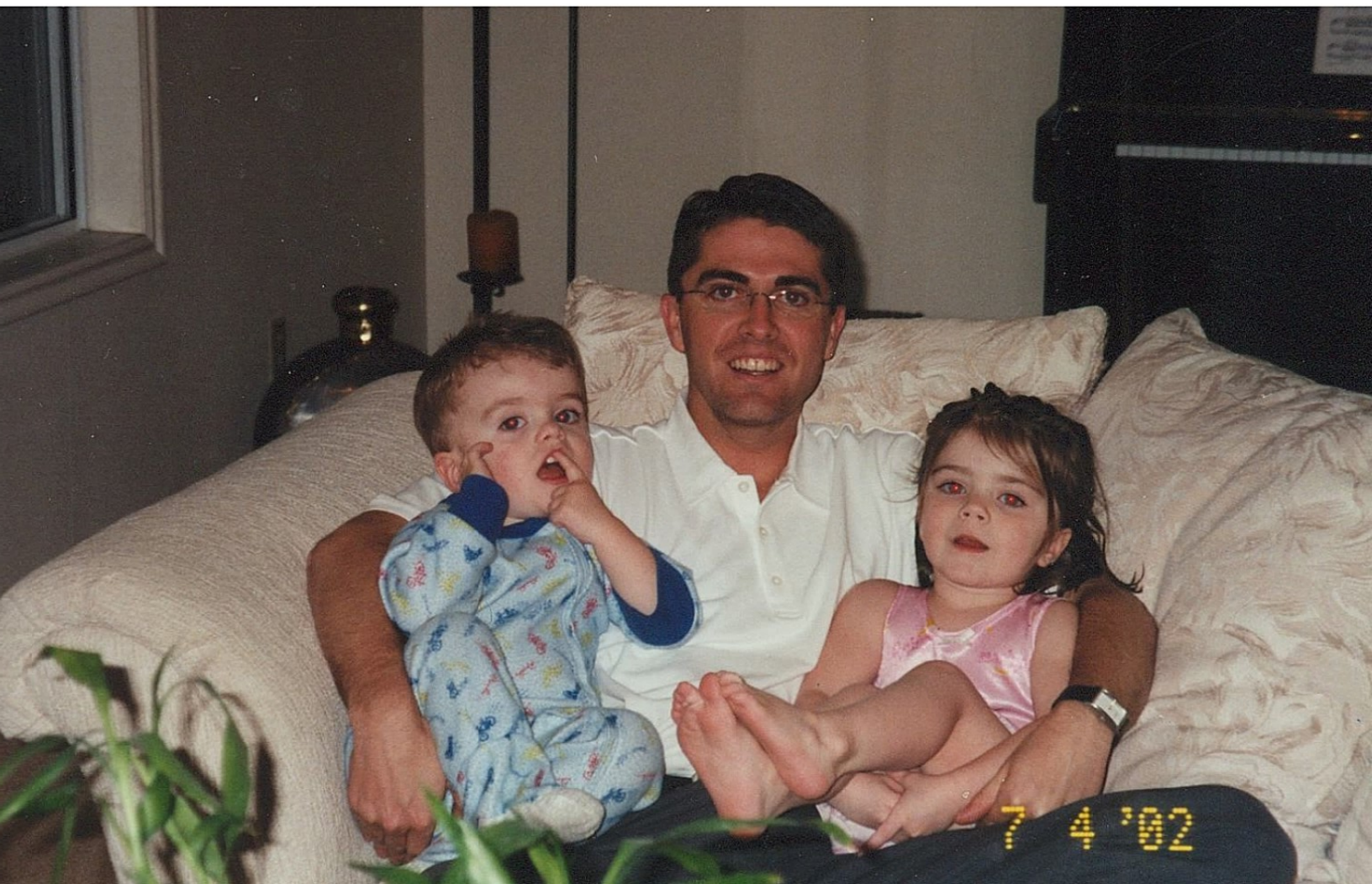
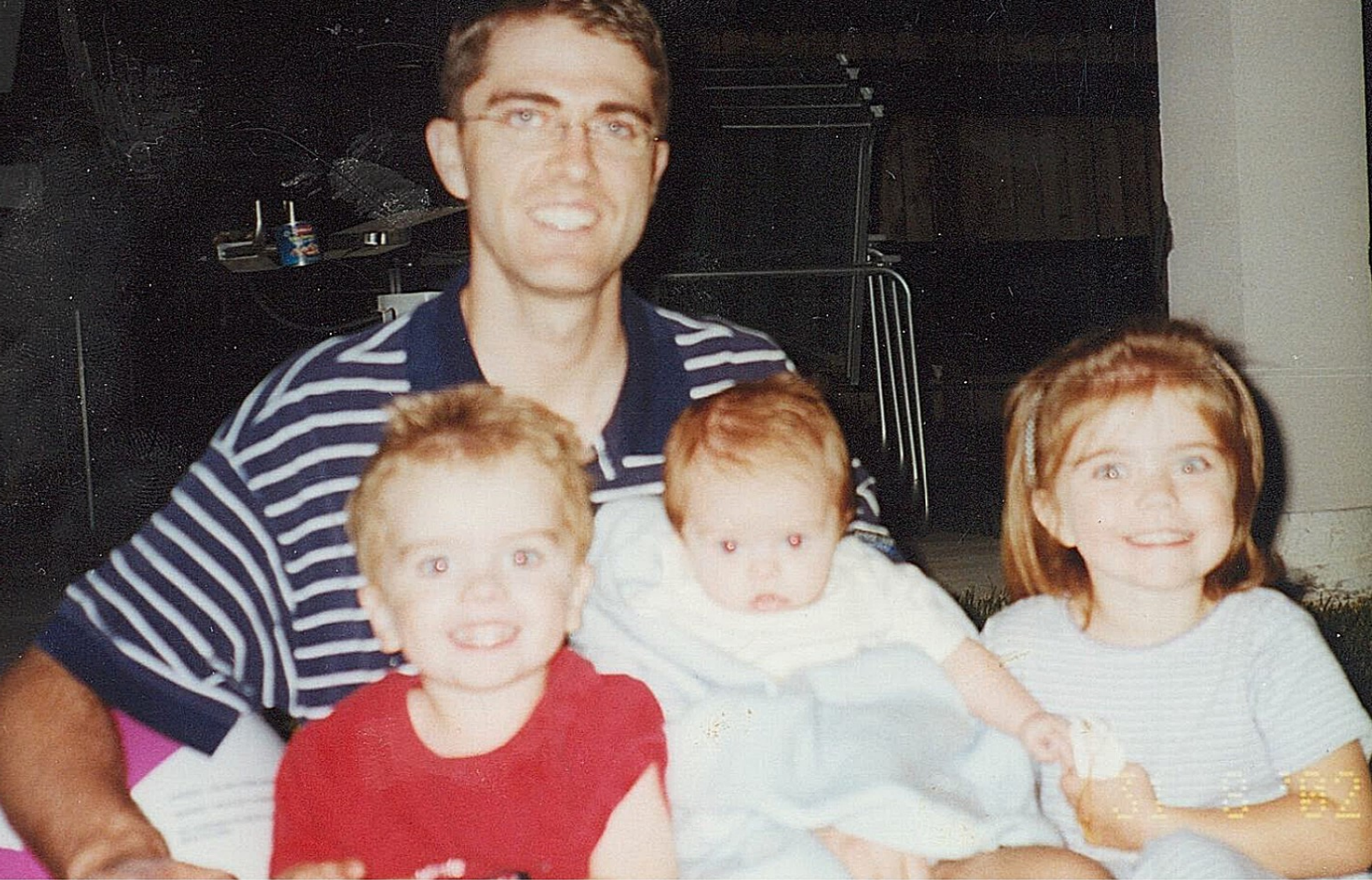


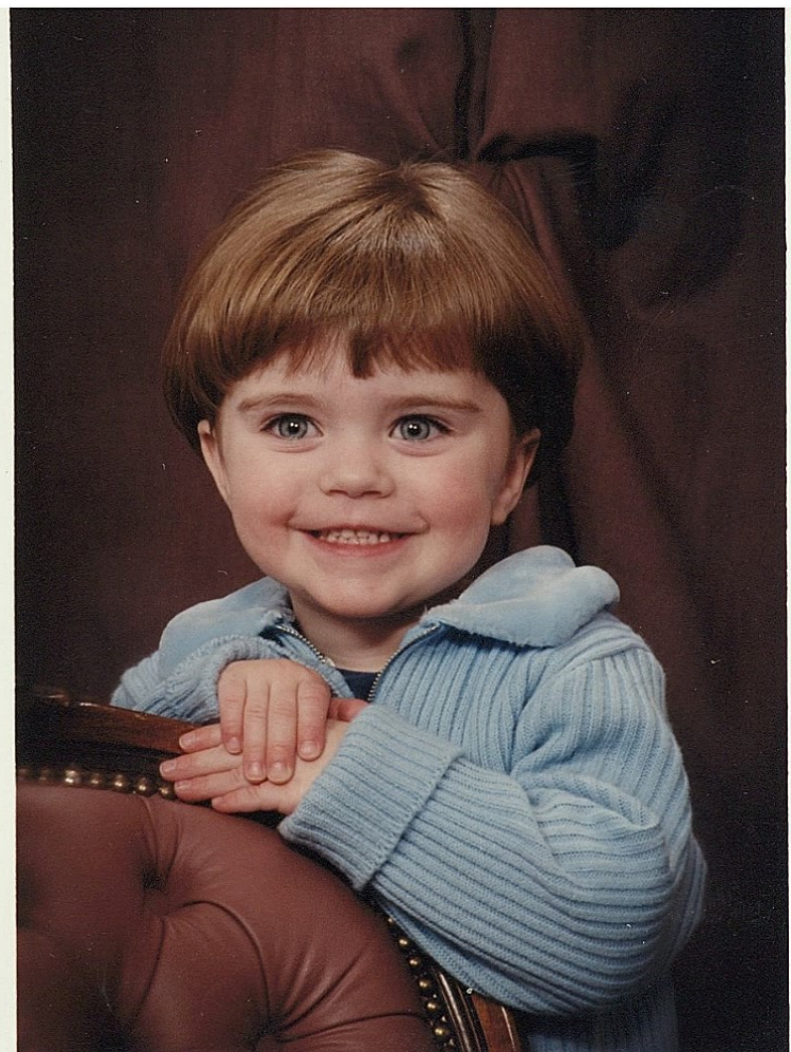












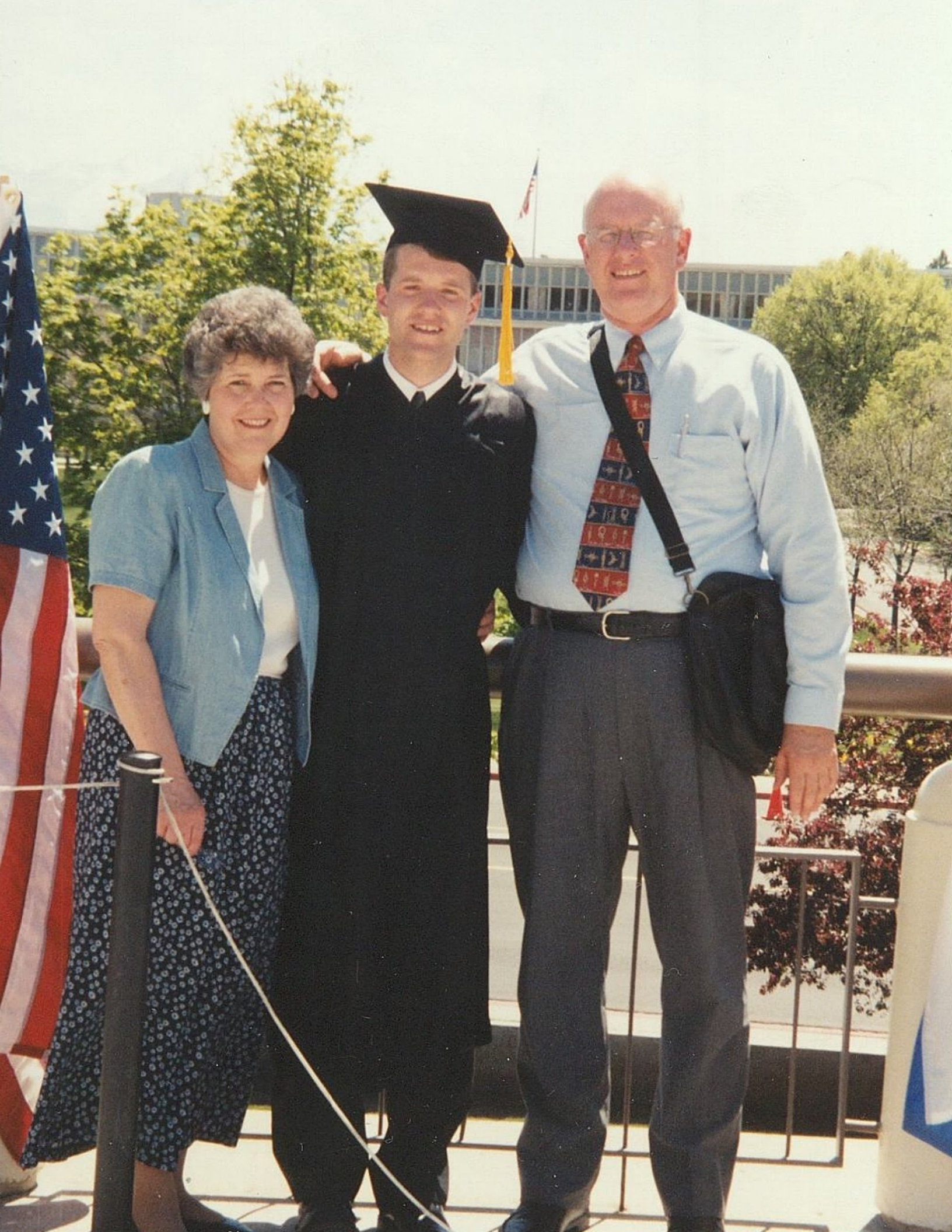






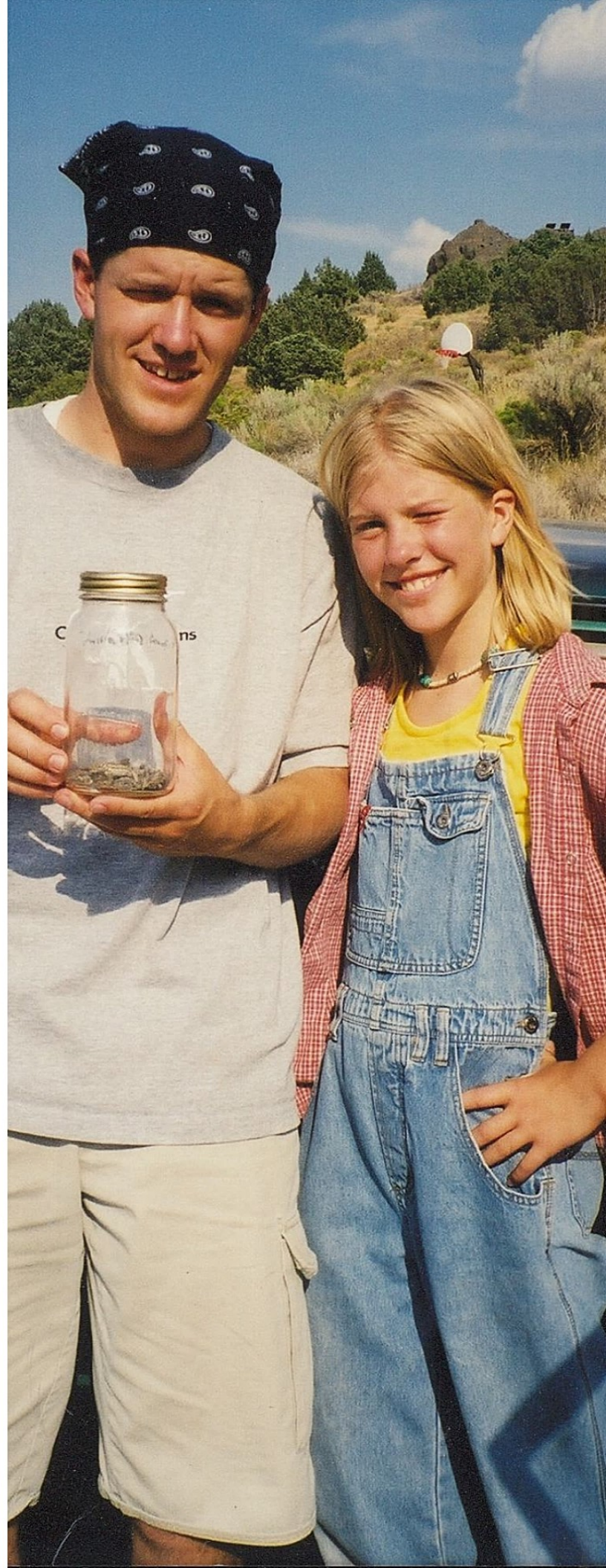
























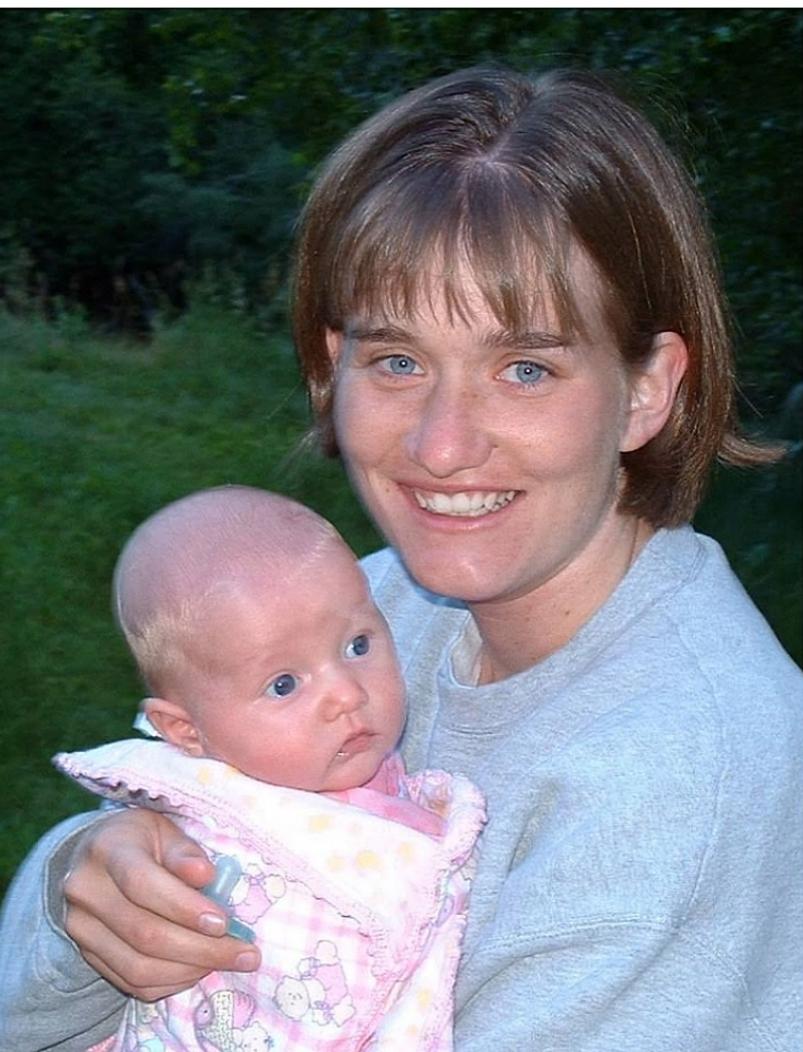






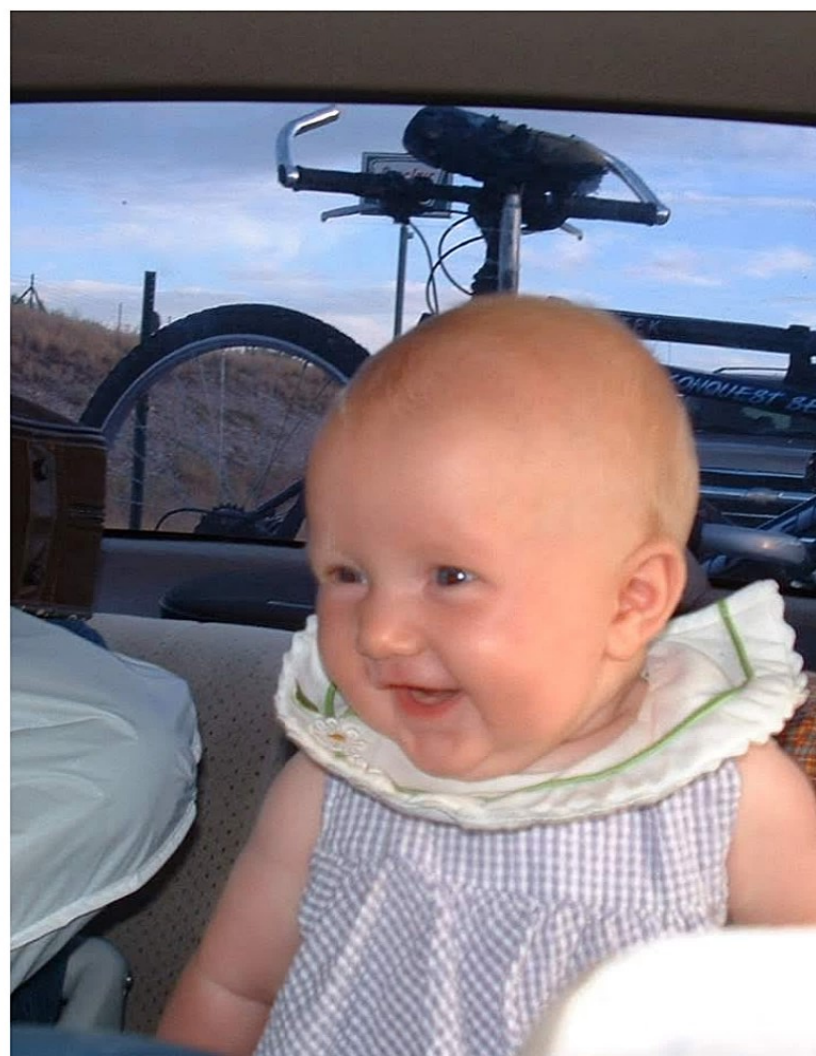








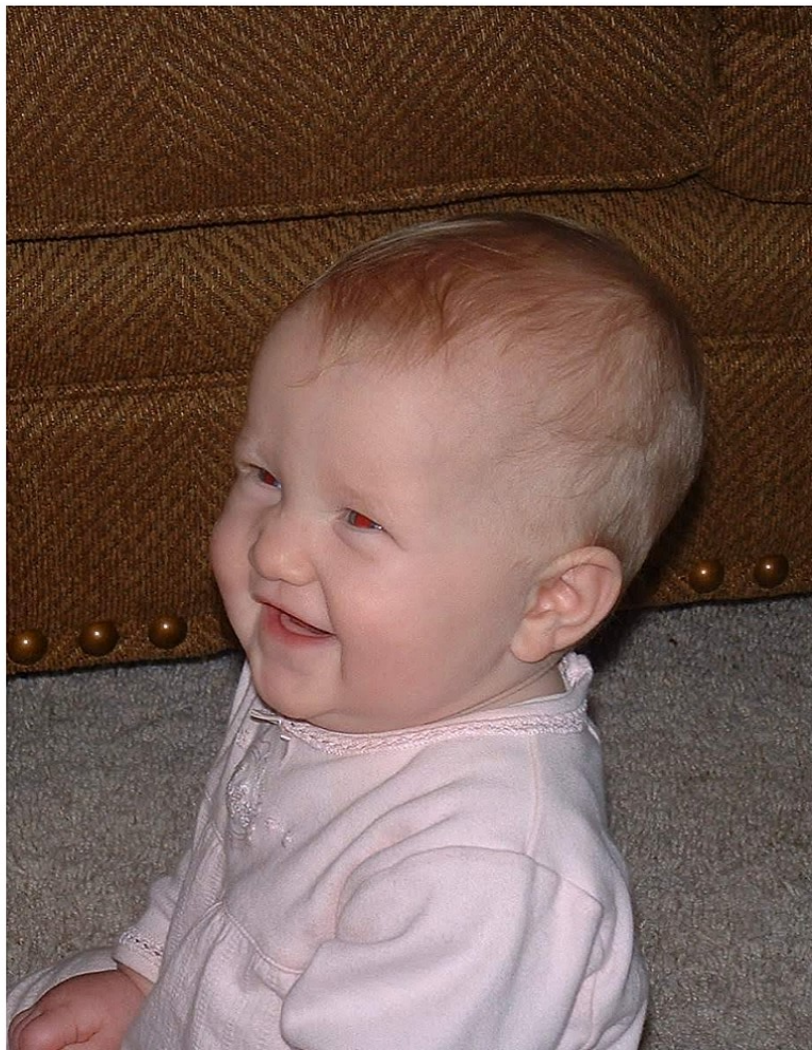




















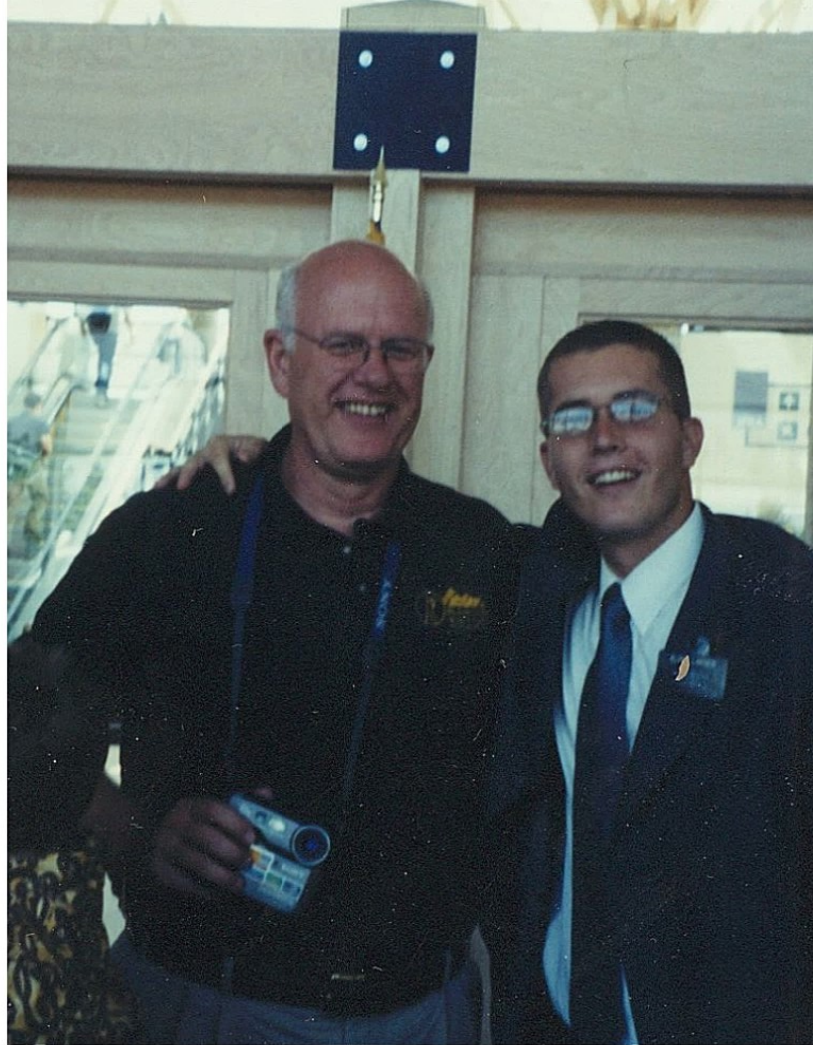






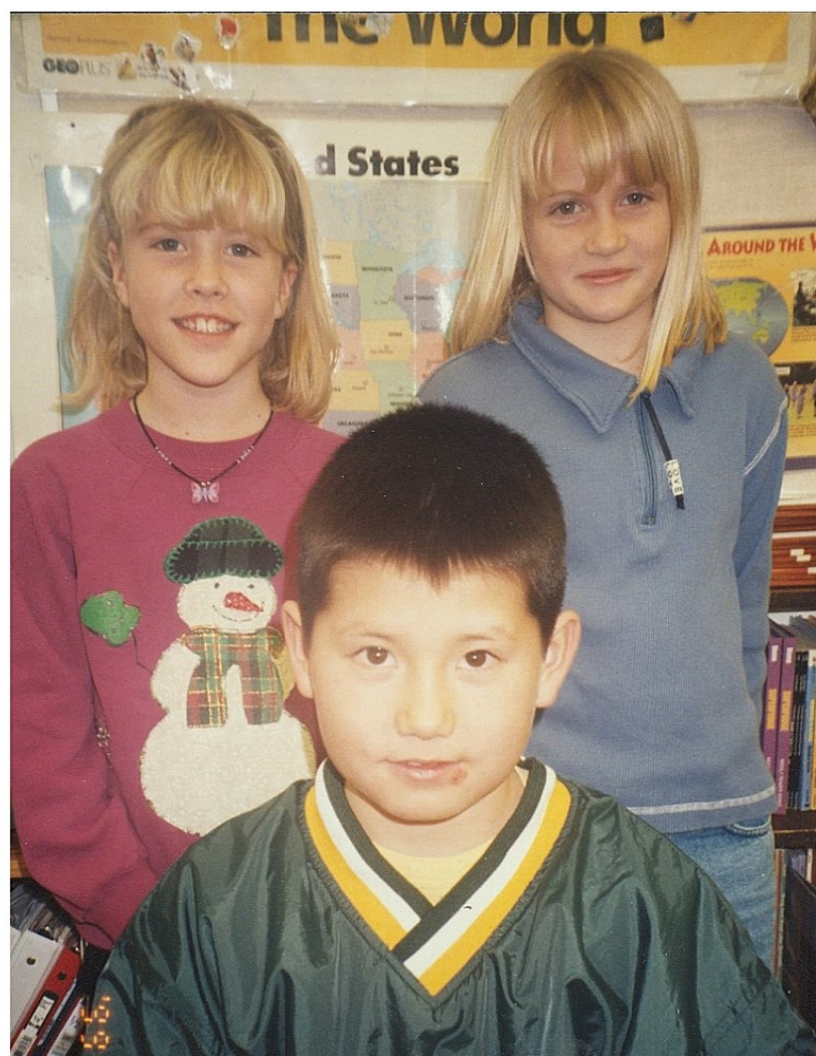
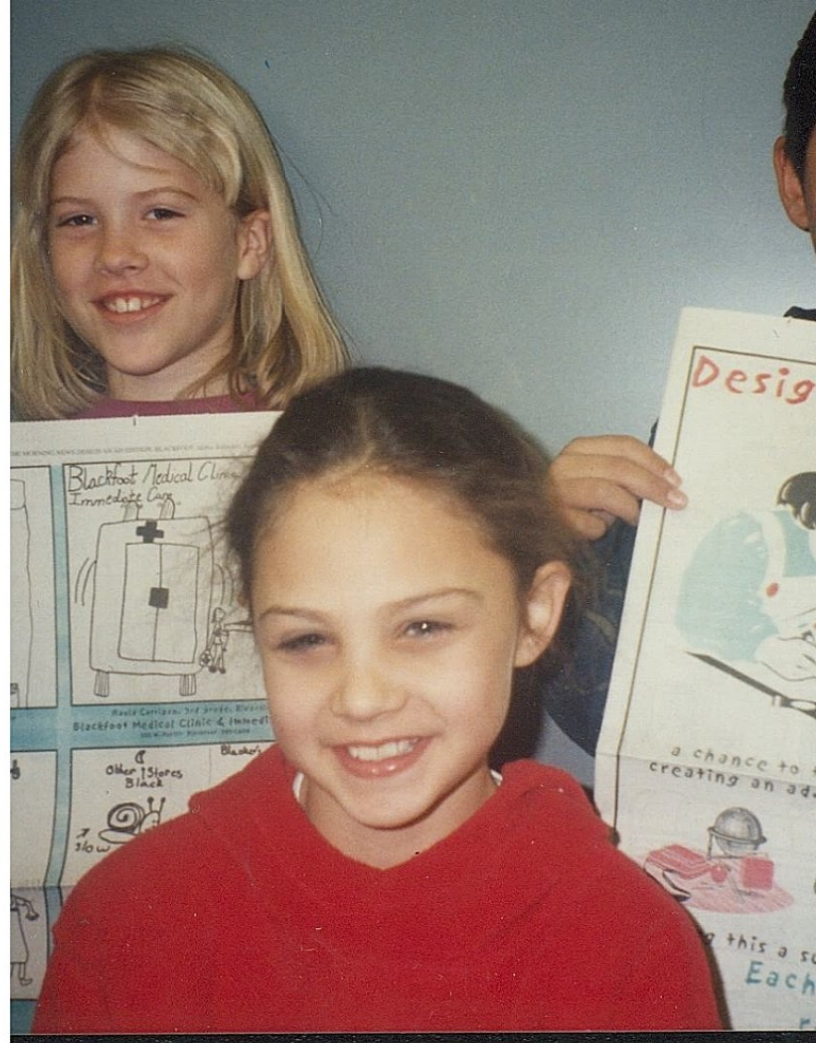




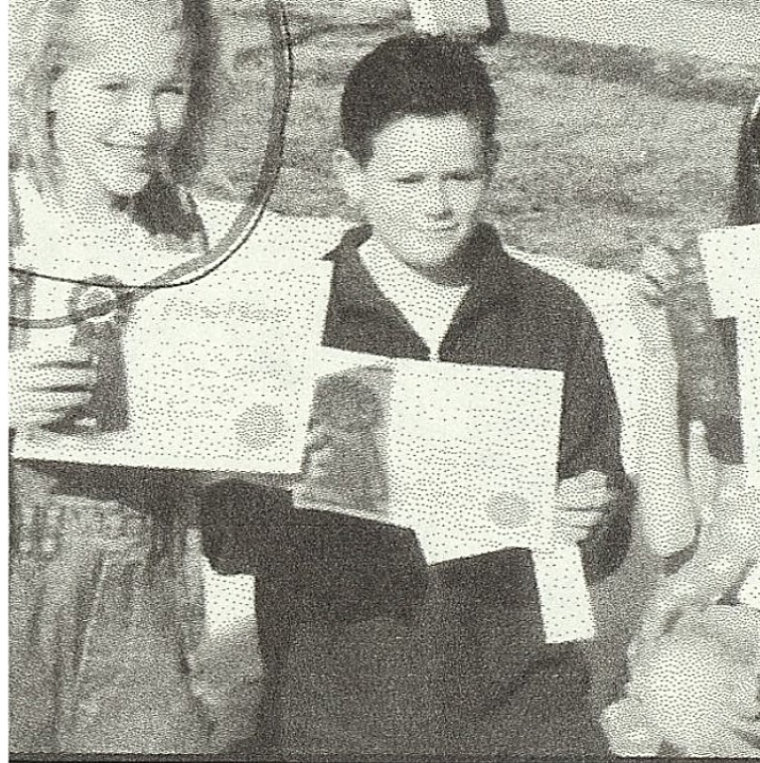
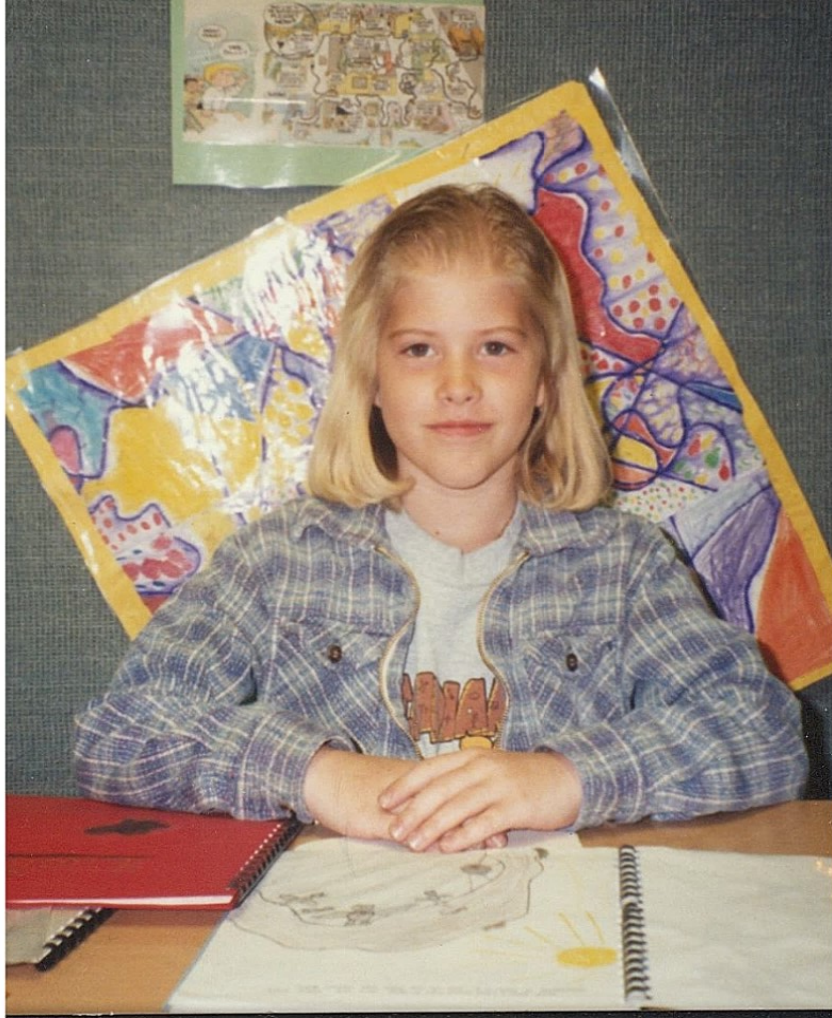




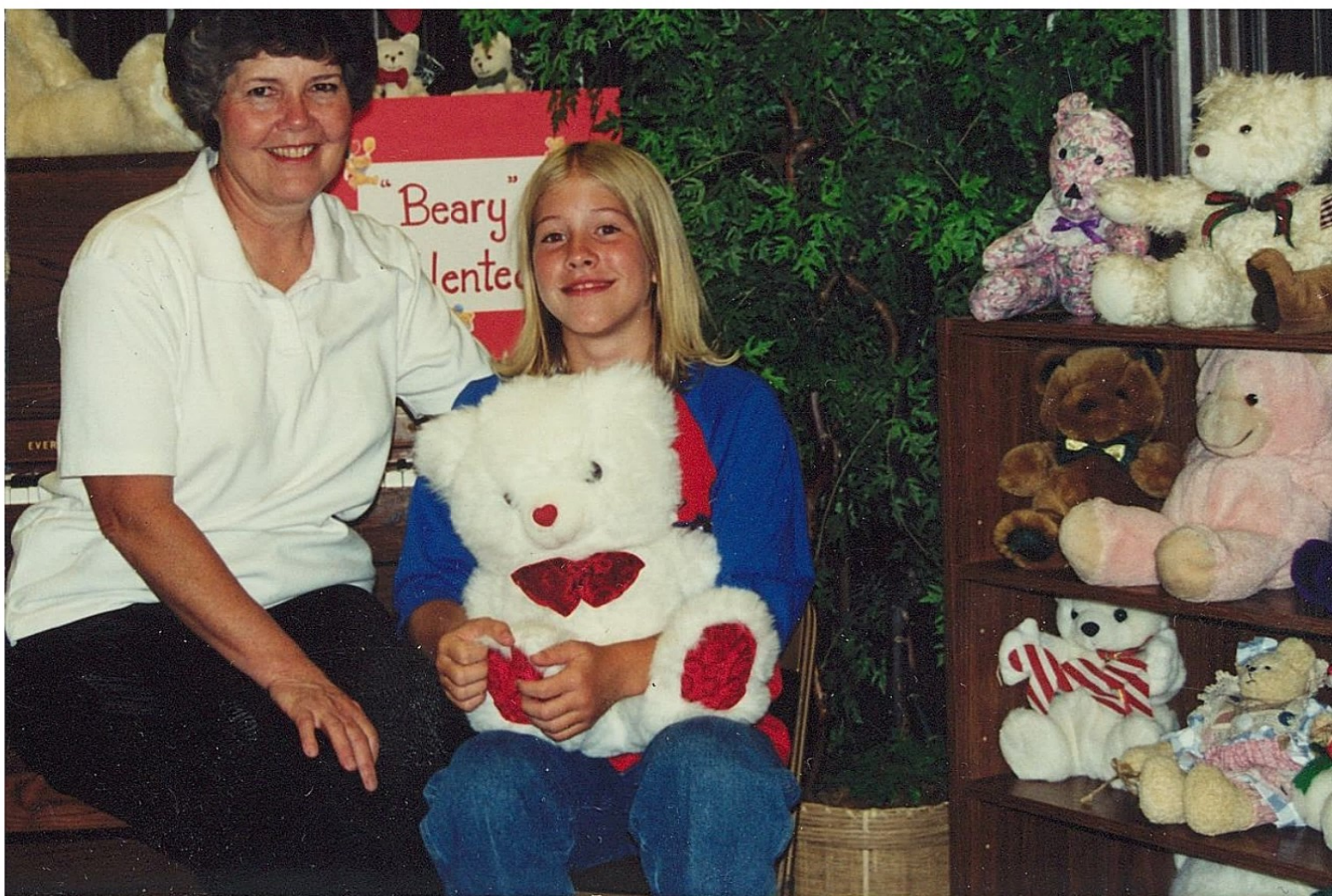


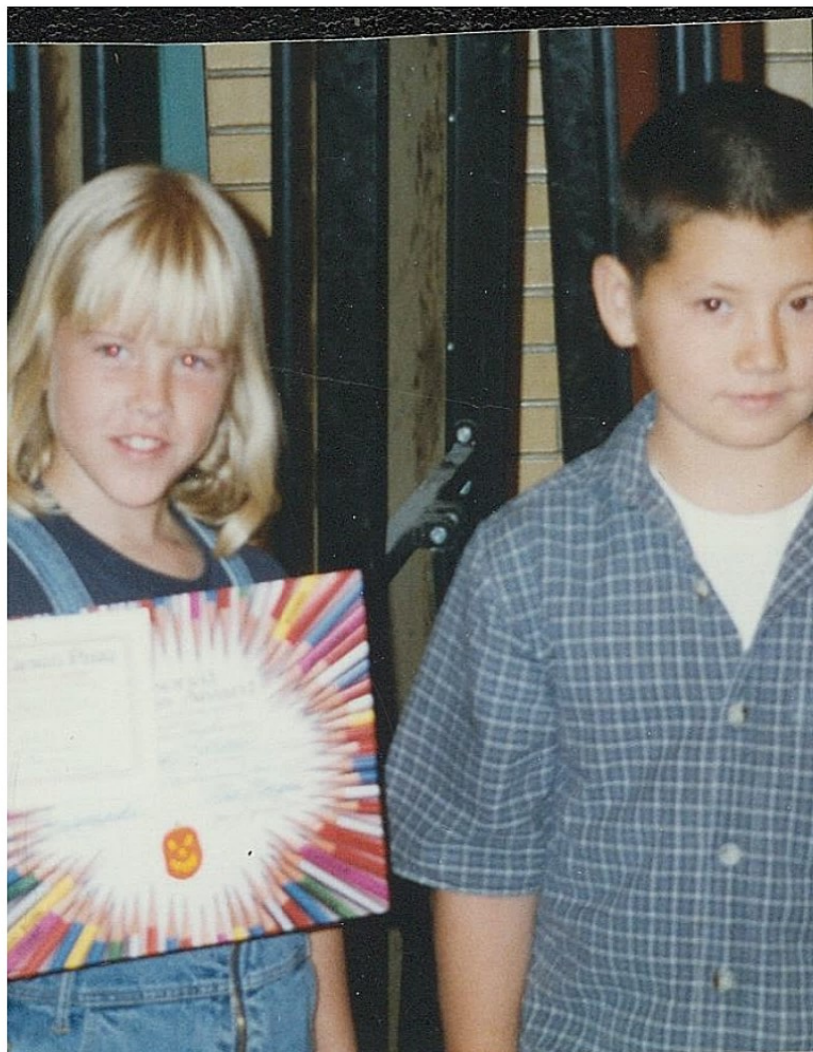






5th Grade Spelling Bee
 1. Sarakay Larsen
 . Angela Winder, 3. Zach Hans

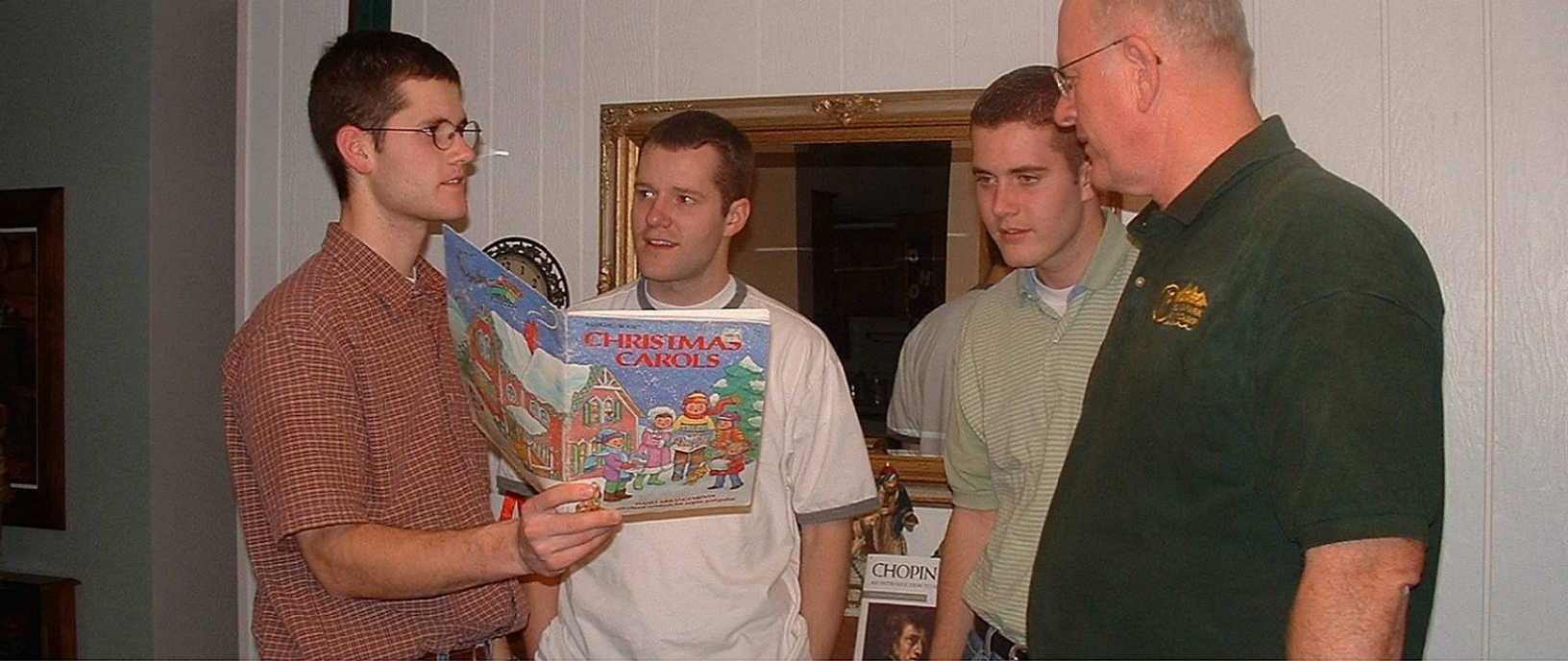












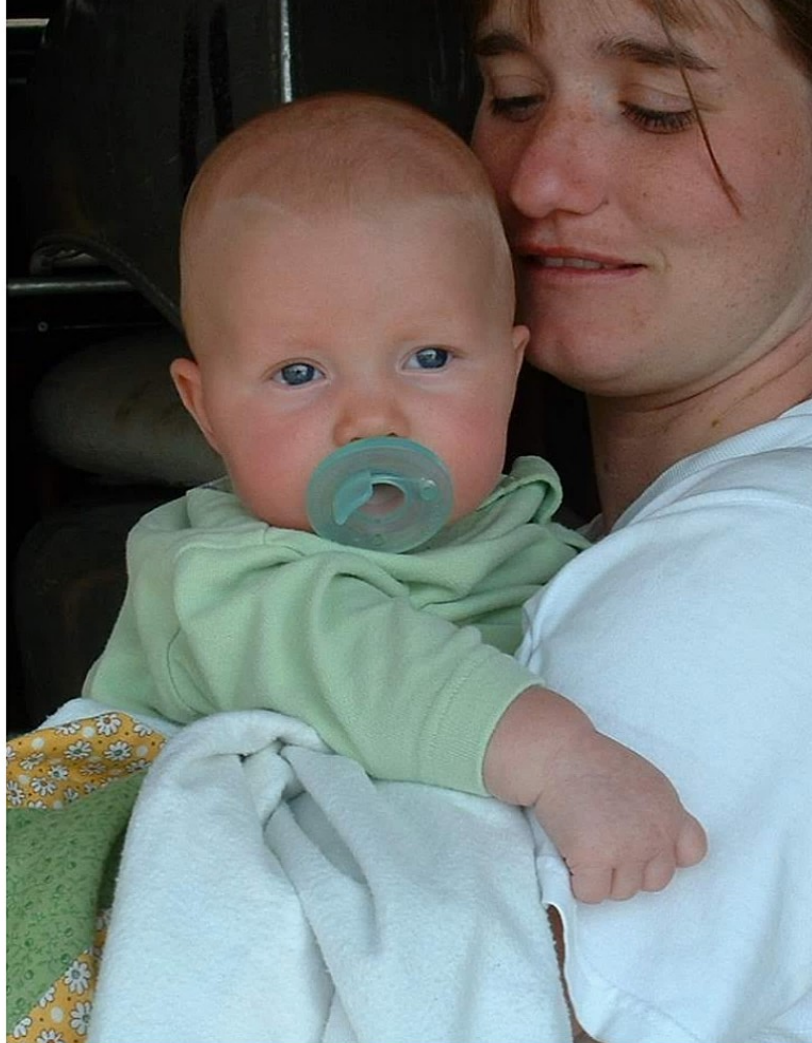












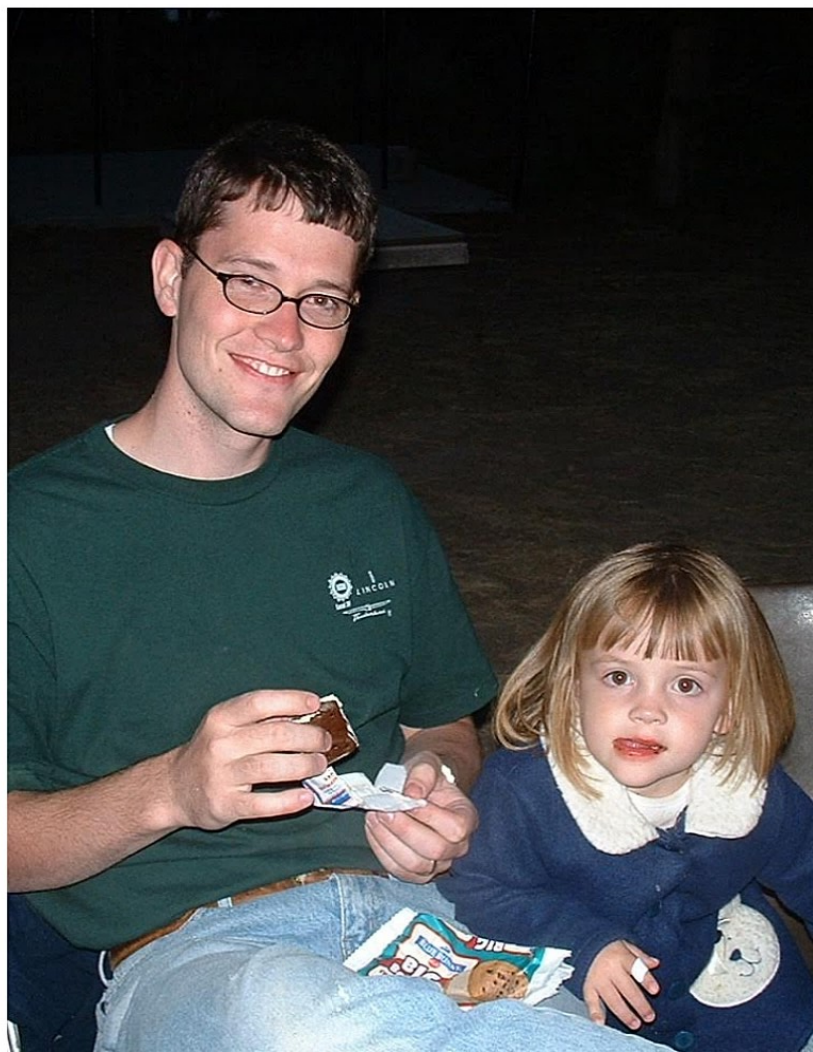












































2003

January 1, 2003

[Mom] It's a winter wonderland outside today. The snow has been falling for several hours, covering everything with a white, wet blanket. SaraKay is outside building an igloo with Hillary and Tricia and I'm going to spend a quiet afternoon writing this letter and then working on the annual ward history. SaraKay and I spent the morning putting away Christmas for another year, changing the beds downstairs, and getting our house back in order. We have had a busy Christmas, complete with family, games, good food, and time to relax.

It's a relief to be getting some snow. All the predictions are for drought conditions this summer if we don't see a lot of snow this winter and our hopes and prayers, both publicly and privately, have been for a wet winter. Although we've needed the moisture, it's been hard for me to want snow when we've had so many of our family traveling the highway between here and Utah. I'm grateful that Grandma is safely back in her own home in Salt Lake and that Paul and Jenny are in Bountiful with the Cutlers and not needing to make that trip in this weather. The only unknown is Mike. He left here Sunday afternoon and spent the evening with Erin Wilkey in Lehi. She is a girl that he has been e-mailing since last summer and trying to get acquainted with over this Christmas break. He spent yesterday in Logan helping Steph and Linds and is in Provo today, hoping to have a chance to spend some time with Andrea, the girl he brought to our family reunion last August. He continues to keep touch with Angela in Iowa and is trying to determine if these Provo romances are going to be worth pursuing. It's a crazy way to court but in his present situation, it appears to be the only way.

We enjoyed having Grandma Richards here with us for Christmas. After picking her up on Saturday, the 22nd, we drove to Rexburg and left her with Don and Deneice for the weekend. They had just arrived a few days before, but they had their house all put together and even the wall hangings in place. Deneice said that she had a lot of Christmas shopping to get done since she had left most of it to do until they arrived at their new home. They will be spending the next six months in Rexburg while Don completes his bachelor's and then they will be moving to the Provo area while he completes his Masters. They have certainly taken a leap of faith in doing this. I know

that Deneice is pleased to be closer to her oldest four children and their families and to mother. Hopefully the winter won't be so severe that I won't be able to spend some time with her before she is far away again.

Sunday afternoon Paul, Jenny, Beth and Mike arrived just in time to join us at Gary and Linda's for the annual Larsen Christmas party. Karen and Jim and family dropped in a while earlier for a visit before going to the party and we enjoyed that short but sweet visit with them. Rick and Terry and bunch also attended and it made for a full house and fun evening. We enjoyed a delicious meal and visiting. It was nice to see Gary and Linda's kids and to catch up on news from them. All their children and families were there except for Ashley. Mindy and Roger had just returned from a three week stay in Salt Lake while Connor had his legs operated on at Primary Children's. Emily is still working at a store as their interior designer. Lisa and Jason are expecting a baby in May, Ryan and McKenzie and Garen and Alison were also there but I didn't get much chance to visit with them. Mike spent some time visiting with Garen about dental school and that proved helpful.

On Monday, the 23rd, Deneice and Grandma met me at a truck stop midway between here and Rexburg and we went to Becky's for lunch. Tim was enroute to Rexburg for work and we did some car swapping at Becky's and sent him on his way. Becky came home with us and spent the afternoon and evening here with us. Chet arrived about six and we had dinner and played games. Chet's parents were due to arrive on Tuesday from Salt Lake so we were grateful that we could have our family together Monday night for our celebration.

It was fun to have Grandma here with us. We figured that it has been almost eight years since she has been here! She was a good sport and joined in all the game playing, the visiting, and singing. Tuesday night she began to get sick with a bad cough and was unable to sleep until nearly 3 a.m. She took some penicillin but felt pretty punk for most of Christmas day. We decided that we would get her home on Thursday where she could rest and take care of herself. Paul and Jenny offered to take her with them as they were returning that day to Bountiful, but we were all concerned that Beth might catch the cold that Grandma was battling and so we chose to not have her ride with them. Thursday morning I drove her to Utah and returned here by about three that

afternoon. The roads were clear and dry and we had a pleasant time visiting.

It was sweet to have some time with Paul and Jenny and Beth. They were scurrying around getting their Christmas gifts made and cards written. Beth wasn't sure if she liked Dad and I but eventually she warmed up and we were able to get her to come to us. She is certainly a sweetheart and joy to have around. She started crawling while she was here and that was fun for us all to share in. Jenny's brother, Spencer, was married last Saturday so they have been able to get in some wonderful family time and events with this trip. Paul will be flying out on the 2nd and Jenny will return the following week. Paul has some very difficult qualifying exams the second week in January and has asked if the family would fast this coming Sunday in his behalf. If he fails these exams, it will be quite a set-back for him in his program. Friday night Steve and Bonnie and bunch arrived and spent the night with us. Bonnie left Saturday morning to attend a cousin's wedding in Idaho Falls and we had the day with Steve and kids. Saturday evening we played games and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to include Chrissy, Rachel, and Nathan in that activity. Sunday morning they left to attend meetings in Idaho Falls and joined with Bonnie's sister, Julie's, baby blessing. It made for a hectic weekend for them, but they said that the kids are getting older and it's not such an ordeal to travel anymore.

Saturday Daddy went with Tim to Rexburg where Tim had located a car that he was interested in buying. He has decided to sell pest control in Houston this summer and knew that he needed to get into a reliable car. He has been looking around and saw a Honda Civic that he thought would serve him well. Before the day was over, he arrived home in his new car and that evening took some of his buddies for a ride. He has been working during the holidays at Melaleuca and has put in two 12-hour days yesterday and today. He has a big semester ahead and hopes to secure a spot in the accounting program at BYU this fall.

We had plans to visit Grandpa and Grandma Larsen in St. George this week but Alva Lu called and asked Daddy if he could help organize his siblings to help with Grandpa while she made a trip to Washington the middle of the month to be with her family there. Daddy phoned the family Saturday morning and everyone was happy to help out. Daddy's time will be January 28th-February 1st. I think it will be a special opportunity for all

the kids to have some one-on-one with Grandpa in sunny St. George. Grandpa has been doing well since moving to Utah and has not been as prone to fall as he was in their condo in Idaho Falls. We appreciate Alva Lu and her loving care for him.

Mike is flying out this Saturday morning for Iowa. This second year second semester is supposed to be one of the toughest of the four-year program so he is dreading getting into it, but he has done very well the past semester and is in a strong position in his class. He enjoys what he is doing and has really enjoyed the opportunity to strengthen the singles' branch through his efforts as Eider's Quorum president. He has fond feelings for Angela and was pleased to know that her family had the first discussion by the missionaries last week. Their response was favorable and of course, Angela is hoping that they will accept the message and join her in her membership in the Church.

We so appreciate all the greetings and gifts that you have shared with us. We look forward to a wonderful 2003. We certainly have much to be grateful for and recognize the Lord's hand in our lives, sustaining us and strengthening us to meet our daily challenges.

[Dad] I don't really have much to add to Sue's account above. I echo her feelings about the sweetness of family and the enjoyable times we have had the last couple of weeks. We also received some photos from Shaunnie and Randy of their two sweet kids and immediately posted them-what beautiful children! We have been to two receptions last week end and saw Vivian Anderson at each. She always pumps us for everything we can tell her about Shaunnie and Randy. Also, while Steve & Bonnie were here, Ann Marie started crawling amidst a grand celebration from her siblings.

Work has been pretty steady with things to do for every hour I was willing to give it. Sometimes you have to just shut down and say it's enough and go enjoy the family or a good book or a movie. I have nearly all the charters in for the three districts I am servicing and Sunday I have training sessions starting for the upcoming Friends of Scouting fundraising drive.

Other than putting in an appearance at the New Year's Eve youth dance, Church work has been relatively quiet during the holidays. We rented a Clean Flicks edited version of The Thomas Crown Affair and thoroughly enjoyed watching it last night. Tim and his friends were here playing a homemade version of True Colors and had a great

time. I finished reading two books over the holidays: "Leadership" by Rudy Giuliani and a collection of short stories by Dick Francis. We even read Giuliani's talk to the United Nations following 9/11 together on Christmas Eve. What a great talk. I am truly impressed with him as a leader.

Another milestone in our lives was finishing reading the Book of Mormon together on Monday night. That has been a very rewarding and uplifting experience to answer our Bishop's challenge to read together as a family and have family prayer each night. I had a hard time controlling my emotions and we read those closing chapters and absorbed the words of Moroni as he described the destruction of his people and charity and so on. The Spirit has borne witness to me many times of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon but never stronger than it did that night. What a blessing it is for us to have the scriptures and living prophets to guide us in these days of trial with temptations on every corner. I am so glad that our family is basically raised but pray every day for you kids raising our grandchildren. May the Lord be with each of you during 2003 and bless you with health, peace, and the necessities of life (and some of the luxuries too). Love, DAD

January 6, 2003

[Mom] I guess we can officially say that the holidays are over. Tim left this afternoon for Rexburg, SaraKay and I are back in school, and we are down to our last few chocolates. Thank goodness! (the chocolates, not Tim) Anyway, we are back into the swing of things. Although we need snow, I have been grateful that all of our holiday traveling was done on dry roads and that everyone, except Jenny and Beth are home safe and sound. They will be flying out this weekend to join Paul in Wisconsin. He is studying for qualifying exams that will be held this week. Our prayers are with him.

I have been busy this past week getting the annual ward history completed and handed in. It's always a challenge to get the yearly write-ups from the quorums and auxiliaries and I have to do a lot of reminding. I enjoy reading the information once I get it, but most people are not too anxious to submit things even though I give them lots of forewarning and instruction.

SaraKay had her first basketball game last Saturday and made eight points. She did a good job passing the ball and was in on several good

plays. I was worried that the boys wouldn't pass to her, but I think they are gaining confidence in her abilities and hopefully will include her in the action. She wanted everyone to know that she got her ears pierced for Christmas. She has wanted to do it for quite a while but I've held her off until she was 12 although I know that is still pretty young. I told her that she could thank Shauntel who was the first of the family to pierce her ears and was the one that had to work hard to convince me that piercing her ears wouldn't necessarily make her a gypsy. How times have changed since I was a girl! Anyway, SaraKay has been enjoying her new look.

I've started back to work and am enjoying not having a music preparation each day. We have decided that we will put the music program on hold until we have a room in which to hold the class. I have been teaching all 65 kids at once in our multipurpose room but it is extremely difficult to teach that size of a group and feel like it's effective.

I visited with Grandma Richards and Grandma and Grandpa Larsen this afternoon and they are doing well. Grandpa has had a couple of falls but nothing serious so I was happy to hear that. The end of January Alva Lu will be going to Washington to attend some family things with her side of the family and Daddy and his siblings are going to trade off helping Grandpa during that 14-day period. Daddy is looking forward to that opportunity to visit and maybe do some sight-seeing, too.

I received a phone call from Deniece's son, Brent, informing us of his mission call to Brazil, Giana. It's been fun to have their family close and be able to call Deniece without it being long distance.

[Dad] Tonight for FHE we talked about the Savior and the last supper and the meaning and significance of the sacrament and how we can focus more during the sacrament so that our thoughts don't stray. Today started out with the usual exercise, exercycle, read the paper, eat breakfast, and shower. Tim wanted a blessing before he went back to school—he is facing a major decision as to his summer work and so on. It is always a privilege to be able exercise my priesthood to bless my family.

Yesterday we changed our meeting block to the 11:00 starting time and it was quite an adjustment. Sue's lesson got off to an unusual start as she pressed Tim and me into singing, "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked" to help

introduce the New Testament course of study. The rest of the lesson was awesome.

I had a couple of stake FOS (Friends of Scouting) training sessions for the Blackfoot and Blackfoot South Stakes. I mainly talked about the Brethren's reaffirmation of the partnership between the Church and Scouting and shared quotes from Elder Hammond and Elder Pace regarding FOS, namely "Suck it up".

Friday night we drove to SLC and Sue and I ate out in the Crossroads Mall and then went to Mr. Mac and bought me a new birthday suit. It is a grey pinstripe and will be a strong addition to the other suit in my wardrobe. We then met Mike at a motel by the airport and saw him off the next morning. His flight left at 6:00 a.m. so we were there at 5:00. I couldn't believe all the people standing in lines to check in for their flights that early in the morning. Sue and I were awake at about 3:30 because the people in the room above us were up and showering and there must have been a dozen people in the room from all the noise they made. Mike had taken the LeSabre to Provo for the week and so Sue drove it home and I dropped Mike off and then followed her home so we could be to SaraKay's game at 8:00 at Mountain View Middle School.

January 13, 2003

[Mom] I woke up this morning while Daddy was getting ready for his meetings and decided to get up and into my day. I had a productive day yesterday and am very close to having the final copy of the ward history completed and ready to submit. I awoke this morning with the thought that one section of it, testimonies of the Young Women leaders, would not copy well because it is on colored paper. The testimonies had been written and put into a small booklet and given to the YW at Girl's camp last summer. They were so filled with spiritual experiences that I thought it would be appropriate to include in our history and have kept my colored copy for that purpose. It must have been inspiration, because I hadn't given it a thought until this morning.

The last two Saturday mornings SaraKay has had a basketball game at eight so we have gotten off to an early start. She has mixed emotions about playing with this bunch of boys. They are very good to her but there is this unspoken separation that I know stems from them thinking they have to treat her differently since she is a girl. They hesitate passing the ball to her because they feel they need to treat her kinder. She has had some

opportunities to be in on some plays but she still feels like she isn't entirely accepted. At first it bothered me but I can't help but feel that it is a compliment to her that they don't view her as "one of the boys". Anyway, she is trying to do the best she can to be an asset.

Daddy's work keeps him hopping. He is meeting with each stake presidency in his three districts and heavily involved in the FOS campaign that is in full swing now. District meetings are underway and he will be attending those as well. His church work will pick up now with ward conferences starting and he mentioned yesterday that he has three talks to prepare for various meetings these next few weeks.

Becky called Monday night and asked if I could help her Homemaking committee out of a bind. Their speaker for Wednesday night had cancelled and they needed someone to talk about parenting. I agreed and it was a fun experience for me to get to visit her ward and meet some of her friends. It is interesting how the composition of each ward is different.

Our ward is finally getting some young couples in it, but we are an older ward and Becky's ward is mostly very young families. It was interesting to make my presentation and field questions from the young mothers.

I have tried to reach Stephani the last few days but I suspect that the phone in their new home isn't connected yet. They were supposed to have help from their ward yesterday for the move so hopefully they are in and getting situated. It has been an exhausting few months for them and I know they will be grateful to have it done. They have a lovely home and we are so pleased that they will be able to settle in now and enjoy it. (Monday) I received a call from Stephani yesterday afternoon confirming that they had moved and were now at their new place. They had the help of some of the ward members and they had moved enough things previously that it wasn't as big a job as it could have been.

Paul called to report that he felt good about the tests he took on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. They were pretty intense (four-hour tests that had six questions). He will find out next Friday how he did but at least the pressure is off for a few days. Jenny and Beth arrived on Friday night and they are all grateful to be back.

Mike spent Friday afternoon and evening with Angela's family in Illinois. He was driving back

Saturday morning so that he could attend the historic First Presidency training session with other members of his stake. He has been keeping in touch with Becky, the returned missionary in Provo, and feels like she and Angela are on the "short list" at the present time.

I called to visit with Jonie for a few minutes and she commented that they had just returned from an ice-fishing excursion on a near-by lake. The weather has been so cold that the ice is about two feet thick in places. The drilled several holes in the ice, dropped in a line that is threaded through a branch that has a rope attached with a net and set the nets. The following day they retrieve the nets and a mess of fish. She said they eat very little beef, just wild game and fish that they have caught. I admire all that they do to be resourceful.

Yesterday afternoon Daddy attended the First Presidency training seminar. When he returned, he sat and went over all his notes with me. What a thrill to be able to get that kind of training right from the Council of the Twelve! We live in a marvelous day and age! I guess this seminar is the first of many, the next one scheduled for June. Think of the savings in transportation costs if these trainings can replace some of the extensive travel that the General Authorities do.

(Monday)Daddy is home sick today with the flu. It started yesterday and he drug around to his meetings trying to take care of his speaking assignments and duties. Last night he felt like he was going to get better but it started in again today and he came home at noon and went to bed. He has had fever and chills and aching. So far no other symptoms. He had his flu shot so hopefully this episode won't last too long.

We received a phone call from Tim tonight letting us know that he had secured a spot in a computer class that was a "must take" to get into the accounting program at BYU. It has been a long ordeal to convince BYU-I that they should offer and give credit that would transfer to BYU Provo.

But, after many calls, the committee in Provo made the decision to let the class in Rexburg count. This opened the way for Tim to take it and not have to sit out a semester after transferring next fall. The next hurdle was that all the classes were filled before Tim got permission and so all of last week, he sat in the back of the class waiting for someone to drop it so that he could take it. Because there was a limited number of computers and classes, the professor put him on a waiting list but he was down four and it looked unlikely

that a spot would open up. Well, when Tim called and rehearsed with me the problem, we decided all there was to do was pray about it and hope the situation would change.

Friday night when Daddy and I were in the temple, I put Tim's name on the prayer roll (I always put all the family's names on the prayer roll) and left it in the hand of the Lord. I guess that today the professor took pity on him and gave him a spot in one of his other classes if he wanted it. Even though it meant a lot of hassle for Tim to switch classes he went ahead and did it. What a relief!

We've had a lot of prayers answered these past months in our family. I appreciated the wonderful advice that Jenny's grandfather Johnson gave Paul about relaxing and letting the Spirit enlighten him. What a faith-promoting experience and an answer to many prayers in Paul's behalf. Sometimes I feel like we're always petitioning for something or other, but when there are so many of us, there are a lot of needs. I know the Lord is aware of us and that he has blessed us so abundantly!

[Dad] I hate being sick! It is so hard when there are so many things I need to be doing and places to go, etc. The chills and fever are wearing me out and I am aching all over. But I feel blessed to have this happen over a Sunday and Monday when the schedule was relatively light.

I just finished reading Michael Crichton's latest, "Prey" and thought maybe nanoparticles were causing my symptoms. What a fascinating book. For FHE tonight Mom led us in a lesson about choices and free agency and told about Viktor Frankl, his experiences in the prison camps and the last great freedom-to choose how you will respond under any set of circumstances. What a great testimony of what I have always said-it is all in your head.

We had a stake priesthood meeting last night and I was still fighting my fever. While I was talking, I felt like sweat was streaming off me in rivers. I don't even know if I was lucid enough to put across my thoughts about covenants. Today I have had some ups and downs in my temperature also. During supper I was so cold I had on a vest and a coat and was still shivering. After lying down a while, I had SaraKay make up a cup of hot chocolate for me and that turned it around and pretty soon I was sweating again. I think I like the fever better than the chills.

Last Wednesday I had my annual review with Kim and Mike-my immediate supervisor. Everything

went well and my evaluation was "Expected Performance." It is hard to believe that a person can work as hard as I have done and get expected performance but that is how it is. At least I am in good standing and have a job for another year.

Saturday morning, we had a big Jamboral meeting. The excitement and anticipation is beginning to build for our Jamboral coming up in May. We will have Elder Hammond here it sounds like, and possibly President Monson. There will be a myriad of activities and fun from zip lines to shooting, to an incredible fireworks display sponsored by Melaleuca.

January 21, 2003

[Mom] Last week proved to be a difficult one for Daddy. As I mentioned in last week's letter, he was sick on Sunday and kept pushing all day to take care of his church responsibilities. Monday he thought that he was feeling a little better but by noon he was so sick with fever and chills that he came home and went to bed. He had made appointments for home teaching on Tuesday evening and hated to cancel those so even though he wasn't feeling good, he went ahead with the appointments. One of his families is Clark and Jan Wray. Jan is a nurse and she inquired when he mentioned that he was feeling ill. After listing to some of his symptoms, she commented that it sounded to her like he may have a urinary tract infection and she suggested that he come in for a check-up the next day to the clinic. He agreed and on Wednesday he found out he did have an infection and the doctor had put him on some strong penicillin.

He was still so sick Wednesday and Thursday that he stayed home from work and dismissed himself from his church meetings as well. Steve Reader and Troy Goodwin, our home teachers, came by on Thursday evening and administered to him. We appreciated their thoughtfulness. By Friday morning he was beginning to feel better. We are so grateful that Jan recognized what was wrong and that he got in to the doctor and got some help. When he finally got back to work, he had a lot to catch up on. But, at least he has solved his problem and is doing fine.

Daddy and I spoke at the Moreland 4th Ward youth fireside on Sunday night. We had a pretty good crowd and were well received. Daddy had already spoken in three ward conferences that day and had several other leadership meetings so he was really tired by the time the day was over. Now that

they are in to their regular round of ward conferences, it gets pretty harried.

Grandma Richards called yesterday to inform us that Deniece had an emergency surgery that morning after spending Saturday night and Sunday in the hospital. Just prior to going to bed she had some terrible pains in her abdominal area and then started throwing up. Don rushed her to the hospital and they did numerous tests. She was fortunate that one of the tests revealed that she was bleeding internally as a result of an ovary which had literally exploded sending blood and infection throughout her abdominal cavity. They operated on her early Monday morning and I visited with Don and later Deniece who was out of surgery and doing much better. They are fortunate they didn't lose her.

I enjoyed having Monday off. SaraKay and I did some sewing and mending and puttering around the house. It felt good to have an extended weekend. Paul called to say that test results still hadn't been posted but that he should know by today how he did. Becky and I are making the trip to Logan on Friday and spending the night, getting in some visiting time with John and Laurel and seeing Steph's new house. We will drive home on Saturday, early afternoon. Daddy was unable to join us since he is leaving next week to spend the week in St. George so he will try to see John in Provo on Tuesday on his way through.

[Dad] Sue gave you the scoop on my UTI from my reading on the internet you can tell the infection has hit the kidneys when you have the fever/chill cycle that I was going through. I'm sure glad to have that behind me and hope I don't have a recurrence. I was grateful to be able to limp through as much work as I did because I couldn't afford four days of down time.

Sunday we had ward conferences for all three wards meeting in the Moreland building: M1, M4, and M5. It is amazing how much difference there is from one ward to the next. All three of those wards are good wards and I'm glad that I know as many of the members as I do. In M4 a sister Serr bore her testimony about getting ready to go to the temple and having to buy garment friendly clothes for her wardrobe. There was a sweet spirit in each of the meetings and great talks given. We felt the conferences were a success.

We started the day at 6:30 a.m. with a ½ hour meeting with each bishopric. Then starting at 8:30 we had a two-hour block sacrament meeting for each ward and no other meetings. Following

the sacrament, we had a couple of speakers that the Bishopric was supposed to have chosen as led by the spirit, the High councilor, a choir number, the Bishop, me, President Van Orden, and concluded with President Shipley. It meant a pretty intense meeting with that many speakers and we had to stay right on time to make it work. The other meetings started at 11:30 and 1:30 and we concluded at 3:30.

I got home and had a quick bite before the Home teachers came at 4:15 and then over to the church for Stake YM/YW correlation meetings. At 6:00 we spoke to the youth fireside with each of the stake presidency taking a ward and utilizing our wives as speaking companions. I brought Sue home and then headed out for a 7:30 stake FOS training meeting. What a great day! It's wonderful to feel well used in the Lord's service and to feel His sustaining influence.

By the way, if you haven't heard: Paul called this afternoon and he found out he had passed all three qualifying exams and he was justifiably excited. Love, Dad

January 28, 2003

[Mom] (Monday) Daddy left about 5:30 for Logan. He will spend the night with Steph and Linds and leave early tomorrow morning for St. George to help with Grandpa for a few days. He has been really busy these last few weeks and was looking forward to spending time with his Dad. He hoped that they can go to the temple, do some sight-seeing, and have some good visiting time.

Friday afternoon Becky, Maddie, and Tate arrived and SaraKay and I joined them for the trip to Logan. Becky had told them that we were all going for a sleep-over to Utah, so they were pretty excited. Chet and Daddy were not able to go with us so it worked well for us to travel together. We arrived at Steve and Bonnie's about six and soon Steph, Linds, and kids arrived and thereafter, John and Laurel with Eliza. They had flown in that afternoon. Emma and James were staying with a friend in Michigan while Laurel took a break from home and accompanied John on his recruiting trip.

We had supper and then while the kids played, we sat around, visiting and laughing. Becky and I stayed at Steve and Bonnie's and John and Laurel stayed with Steph and Linds. Saturday morning we enjoyed our time in Wellsville and then joined the Bennion's at basketball games for Josh and

Sam. Following this we toured the new house and had a chance to spend some time with Steph and Linds. Steph had even done some stenciling to add a homey touch to the guest room.

It was fun to be there for Anne Marie's birthday and to get in on watching her eat a big piece of her birthday cakes. By the time she was through, she had thoroughly demolished it and had it all over her face, hands, and hair. Of course, the camera was rolling so that it could be recorded for posterity! Sam and Josh especially got a kick out of it!

Eliza has grown so much since the last time we saw her and surprised us all with her jet-black hair and dark eyes. She looks like a miniature Emma only with darker skin and hair. She has a ready smile and responded to all our antics. Laurel said that she and Arch looked a lot alike when they got them together at Thanksgiving. Larsen has the same dark hair and the three of them are quite a contrast to the blondies, Anne Marie and Beth.

By the time we left Wellsville Saturday morning, Chrissy and Maddie were playing together and Jared and Tate were also. It took them a while to bond, but it made me grateful for the opportunities for the cousins to get better acquainted.

We arrived home about five on Saturday afternoon and I had to be to the Scouting District Recognition Banquet at six. Just after I arrived at the dinner, two very handsome little scouts came running up and gave me hugs!—the Kalitz twins who I had recruited earlier in the year! They were dressed head to toe in uniform, including highly polished black shoes and billed hats. They were assisting with the flag ceremony and they even had their dad with them. I kept my eye on them throughout the evening and was pleased to see that they were having a wonderful time with their troop.

When the evening was over, they helped put away chairs and the kitchen help even sent them home with some extra potatoes from the meal. Jim, the dad, his long hair in a hundred small braids, and looking very unlikely, seemed to be enjoying himself as well and Daddy and I just had to smile with delight each time we noticed some other sweet scouter take time to shake his hand and make his acquaintance. I think he and his boys had a positive experience and enjoyed the evening.

About three weeks ago it was announced that Honor Society was sponsoring a talent competition with prize money for the first three winners. SaraKay wanted to participate and so we began trying to figure out which piano piece she would perform. She didn't really have any number prepared that she felt showed off her talent. Finally, she came across a Chopin "Polonaise" that she liked. I doubted that she could get it ready in time but she was pretty determined and put aside all of her other practice pieces, focusing entirely on the Polonaise. After a week she had made a lot of progress on the piece. After two weeks she had it entirely memorized and when the talent show was postponed for a few days, she had additional time to fine tune it. I was still nervous about it, knowing that in a performance situation, unless the piece is almost over prepared, it can cause a memory lapse. Anyway, I kept my reservations to myself and took off work Monday morning to be there for her performance.

She competed against 14 other students with a wide variety of numbers. I personally felt that she was deserving of one of the three top spots, but I have learned that judging is not predictable and I didn't know how it would go. I doubted from seeing the other numbers that anyone competing had worked any harder than she had on their number, so I felt that she was worthy of doing well. She performed without a hitch and that was very rewarding for both of us. Linnea had counseled her to do her best and not be concerned about pleasing the audience, just focusing on each passage and how she wanted it to sound. Although it was nerve-racking for me, I wanted to be there to praise her, win or lose, and especially if she lost. When the judging was completed, she had won first place and \$75.00! She was pretty excited and has already thought of several places for the money to go!

I have tried not to be selfish in my desire for her success in this venture, but looking back over the years, I can point to certain competitions that seemed to be turning points in each child's piano experience. It is so discouraging to practice and practice and never have an experience that reaffirms your talent and ability. I remember Steph's winning a scholarship from the Blackfoot Music Association when she was 14 and what a boost that gave her. When Shauntel won Crawford Cup it seemed to be a turning point for her, too.

One of the things that SaraKay has had to put up with in her musical training is all my memories of what some of the rest of you did when you took piano lessons. On occasion, following her lesson, (at 6:00 a.m. in the dark of early morning) we will visit about a particular concept or challenge she is facing and I will tell her of something on of you other kids did to inspire her to keep plugging away. The other morning, following her lesson in which she played the entire piece memorized, Linnea praised her efforts and commented that it was amazing that she had been able to pull this piece together in such a short time!

When we got in the car to drive home that morning, I commented to her, "Well, SaraKay, I guess you now have your own story to tell to future generations!" She smiled and in that moment I felt like this mountain I've been climbing with her ever since she started taking piano, had just become a little less formidable. It is a weighty thing to know that you have a child that has a gift and then to be able to find a way to help them see their potential and work to reach it. And it's a wonderful day when they begin to see the vision for themselves and you can step behind to gently nudge instead of being in front of them, pulling all the way.

We have felt such elation at the results of Paul's testing and certainly ascribe it to the Lord's loving support and to Paul and Jenny's dedication and hard work. Mom

February 4, 2003

[Mom] When I read Paul and Jenny's letter, I appreciated them sharing with us their wrestle to come to a decision regarding the house. I have found that the Spirit works with me in much the same fashion. When I make a decision and I continue to feel unsettled, it usually is a sign that my choice is not right. Ofttimes, I don't realize just how unsettled I have felt until after I back away from it. I think we learn how to hear the Spirit by going through that process and identifying how the Spirit manifests the truth to us. Some people have a "stupor of thought" but my personal experience is a little different. Never-the-less, it is a wonderful thing to take our decisions to the Lord and receive a confirmation or a warning that the course we have chosen isn't a wise one.

Daddy had quite a trying week last week. He had been looking forward to his time in St. George with his dad but last Sunday he had the "chills and fever" sensation starting to come back on him so Monday morning he had a doctor's appointment

and got some medication before leaving that afternoon for Logan. Tuesday morning he was up early and on his way, arriving in St. George early afternoon. He had struggled most of the way, feeling like he needed to urinate but not able to relieve himself completely. That afternoon he continued to experience discomfort and it intensified until about three a.m. he was in so much pain that he went into the hospital emergency room in St. George. Apparently, the long trip had exacerbated his infection so that he wasn't able to urinate properly. It's hard to imagine it, but they drained off nearly two liters of urine. They put in a catheter and made an appointment for him to see a urologist on Friday morning before leaving for home.

He returned to Grandpa's place by about 7 a.m. and was able to function the rest of the week without too much problem. They were able to attend a session at the temple and enjoy their time together. Aunt Jeannie arrived Thursday night and so Daddy was able to meet his appointment the next morning and head for home, arriving here about 5:30. He still isn't feeling very well but has an appointment with a doctor in Idaho Falls and hopefully can get the help he needs.

It has been pretty discouraging for him. He has so many demands on him right now with all the district dinners going on and still being short-handed in three of the districts until they hire another District Executive for the Ririe, Roberts, and Arco areas. In the meantime, he is doing his best to be where he needs to be and do what he needs to do.

After our meetings yesterday we drove to Rexburg to spend a little time with Tim. He is carrying 18 credits and still working a lot of hours. He has asked for a change in his assignment so that he is a "hot-shot", working just the end of the month and a few hours on Saturday, but the wheels of change move slowly and he is still working between 20-30 hours a week, especially at the end of the month. We had a short but sweet visit and he offered to give Daddy a blessing. We sequestered ourselves in his bedroom away from the noise of the TV and roommates and Tim gave him a beautiful blessing. There were some tears shed. I know it meant a lot to Daddy.

After we left Tim, we dropped in to visit Deniece and Don. It has been quite an adjustment for them to be transplanted at this stage of their lives. Don said that his professors don't quite know what to do with him. He said that so many times

he has insights that he would like to share in the class, especially if he feels like the subject matter is being presented in an unrealistic way, but he has felt that the professors don't want his input. It has been quite a challenge for him to sit on his hands and look on, knowing full well that some of the things being taught are purely idealistic.

Don expressed his appreciation for Tim. He said that last week he was trying to complete an accounting assignment and needed some tutoring and Tim came over to their home and spent some time going over the assignment with him. He said that he was so sweet and patient with him.

It has been fun for us to have Deniece and Don in our lives again. Deniece and I are planning to attend Women's Week together in March. Tim is going to take me to class with him so that I can meet his teachers. By the way, Leonard Peterson is his religion teacher. Some of you will remember that Leonard was the Seminary teacher in our district for several years during the Stephani/Shantel/Jonie/twins era. Well now he is teaching at BYU and we told Tim to introduce himself to Brother Peterson and say "Hi" for us. Well, Tim did it and Brother Petersen told him that he knew the minute he saw him that he belonged to Steve and Sue Larsen. He said that Tim's mannerisms are so much like his Dad's that there was no question who he belonged to. And he also highly complimented Daddy and our family. That was nice to hear!

In closing I thought that I would write "the rest of the story" that I included in last week's letter regarding SaraKay and her talent show. Soon after the weekly letter was transmitted the phone calls began to arrive, congratulating her on her win. She asked me how her siblings knew that she had won and I told her that I had included it in the family letter. She wanted to read what I had written and so I read it to her. When I finished the part about our conversation in the car following her lesson, she said, "Mom, I don't remember you saying that." I said, "How could you not remember that magical moment?" and she said, "Well, I remember Linnea complimenting me but I don't remember you talking to me about it on the way home." I said, I can't believe you can't remember it! She said, "Well, I was so tired that I just was sitting there trying to get some sleep on the drive home and I think I dozed off." Well, so much for magical moments!

[Dad] It was interesting to receive and read last week's family letter in St. George. It helped me to

realize what a lifeline the family letter can be and how important it is in maintaining our connections with each other. Sue told about my bladder expanding experience-I felt so helpless--so much pain and discomfort and not being able to do anything to relieve it. I looked up the address of the hospital in St. George and was able to drive right to it. Dad was amazed that I was able to do that in an unfamiliar town at 3:00 in the morning. After being up all night I just slept most of that morning after getting Dad his breakfast. That afternoon we watched the video of the Satellite Training Broadcast that I took to share with him. With all the leadership meetings Dad has been involved with throughout his life I knew he would enjoy that broadcast. He really did--he didn't doze off once.

The next day we went to the temple. It was the first time I had been through the St George temple and only the second time for Dad. He is doing a lot better and he hardly used his walker at all while I was there. It was a sweet experience to go through the temple together. Dad said I had to dress twice and still wasn't the last one dressed. It was also sweet to have a few minutes with Karen on one end of my stay and Jeanie on the other end. I think all together it was a wonderful experience for each of us to be able to spend that time with Dad. I was surprised that Mark took Dad to Enterprise to see Sherwood Bracken and brought home some potatoes. Sherwood used to be one of our seed potato clients.

When I got back on Friday, SaraKay and Sue wanted to do something like go to a movie-so Saturday night we went to "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Saturday morning I spent at the Klondike Derby which was more like a spring camporee--the weather was so warm and not a sign of snow. All the sleds had wheels or were carried by the patrol. Will Thomas told me about the prayer offered by one of the Harper boys before our ward left on Friday night. He said something like, "I know we need the moisture--but could you hold off until after 2:00 tomorrow." We had about 300 boys and leaders and it was a great campout.

February 11, 2003

[Mom] We just completed Home Evening and I thought that I would get this letter started even though I want to wait until tomorrow to send it. Daddy has another appointment with the specialist tomorrow morning and we hope to have some answers as to whether he needs surgery or

not. Last week at his appointment the doctor visited with him and sent him on his way and then later that day he started getting sick again and was right back where he started. So, this time we hope to get this thing resolved.

Grandma Ilene spent a couple of days in the hospital last week because of some stomach pains she had been experiencing. After tests were conducted, they discovered that she had an infection in the upper part of the large intestine. The physician said that it looked like this was a recurring problem although it hadn't been diagnosed before. Mom came home on Thursday with pain medication and the results of the tests were expected tomorrow. She has quite a time finding just the right combination of prescription drugs since so many of them make her ill, but she was in better spirits and encouraged when I talked to her last night.

SaraKay and I babysat for Becky and Chet on Saturday. SaraKay is hoping to break into the babysitting market around here and these times of sitting for Becky help her to learn what she needs to know (with me tutoring) and also provide her with some spending money which she really appreciates. We had the kids here for most of the day and returned to Idaho Falls about six to get them down for the night. It was kind of a misty, cold night and before we reached Idaho Falls the roads became very wet and icy in places. It was frightening to think of having an accident with the "three munchkins" on board and we crept along until we arrived safe and sound. By eight SaraKay and I were leaving for home, expecting bad roads, but to our surprise it had warmed up enough that the roads had cleared off and we didn't have any problems.

Last Thursday I spoke in the Moreland First Ward on marriage relationships at a couple's Valentine Dinner. It was supposed to be both Daddy and I but he had a scout dinner in American Falls that he was responsible for and so I did my own thing. There were so many people there that I've known for a long time and so it was a little strange giving them advice, although afterwards a lot of them sought me out to share some of the situations they are dealing with at this time in their lives. It turned out to be a special evening for me and the only thing that would have made it better is if Daddy could have been there, too.

Tim received word today that he's been accepted to BYU/Provo for fall semester '03. He has to apply now for the School of Accounting and

hopefully he can get in for fall. He worked so many hours last week that he is struggling to keep his grades up and today he gave notice at Melaleuca that unless they reduce his hours, he will have to quit. He is financially able to do that although it will be tight until his job starts in May. He is hoping to come home this weekend and spend a couple days. We would love that since it seems like we hardly ever get any visiting time with him. There is a chance that he and his buddies are cooking up a date for Saturday so we might even get to meet a girl that he is interested in.

[Dad] Last week I was so excited to go to the doctor on Thursday and get my catheter out. But then as the day went on, I realized I still had a problem. I was in American Falls getting the Bing Pow District Recognition Dinner ready. When I got ahold of my doctor on the phone, he said I better get another catheter in and he would see me next Tuesday. So I went to the American Falls hospital about 6:00 and made it back to the dinner 10 minutes before it started. Things went well, although we only had about 83 people there. There was an American Falls/Aberdeen basketball game and an American Falls wrestling match which drew away most of our crowd.

The day before we had a National Teleconference for new unit prospects-churches, high school clubs, law enforcement groups. We had it in three locations in the Council and felt good with the attendance we had. Afterward I was at the Idaho Falls office and ended up helping Dave Jones get seats out of the basement of the office to put in the van he was getting ready to take to Boise for the visit with the Governor for our Cub, Scout, Varsity, and Venturing representatives and their families. I ended up straining something in my back and have felt pretty punk because of that for the last few days.

Saturday I took SaraKay to her game and helped take care of my share of the Trainer Development Conference. She did a great job-eight points and caused several turnovers and several assists and rebounds. After the TDC, I changed clothes and represented the Stake Presidency at the Primary Broadcast in honor of the 125th anniversary of the organization of the Primary. Each of the General Primary Presidency spoke and did wonderful jobs and then President Hinckley concluded. He is such a marvelous prophet and is so tuned in to the needs of the Saints--young and old alike.

Sunday was Scout Sunday for most of the churches around here. I had arranged to be a part of the Catholic mass. It was really an interesting experience. I felt like a duck out of water; it is such a different protocol. It was great to greet and shake hands with so many good people and to sense their sincerity and dedication. I was able to follow along with some of the script and songs and keep watching out of the corner of my eyes to know when to stand and when to sit. My turn came after their sacrament which was toward the end of the meeting. I mentioned the great partnership between Scouting and the church (they sponsor a troop) and the inspired beginnings of Scouting as founded by Baden Powell. I shared several quotes from him that I thought were appropriate and then concluded with a presentation of a new flag to the Father because I had noticed a couple of weeks earlier how faded their flag was and how it had weathered many storms.

They gave me a rousing round of applause. We had a color guard that presented the flag as a part of the service and Scouts and Scouters in uniform that served as ushers and followed the priest in at the beginning and out after the service. I could feel the absence of the Spirit during the service but felt the spirit of community and devotion as they worshipped together. After the service we lowered their old flag on the flag pole in the grounds outside the church and raised the new flag I had given them and I played "To the Colors" as the flag was raised. Then they have a social with pastries and drinks (coffee or orange juice) in the parish hall. I mingled and visited and saw quite a few people that I knew. All in all, it was a great experience and I hope that I made some new friends.

February 18, 2003

[Mom] It was hard getting back to school today after a three-day weekend! But it was nice to have all the fanfare for Valentine's Day out of the way and to have things a little calmer. I think that between the store owners and the school teachers, everyone gets whipped into such a frenzy prior to holidays that the spending and parties are blown way out of proportion.

Our weekend was harried. Daddy had three ward conferences and was busy from early morning until after the fireside at six that evening. Fortunately, his health hasn't kept him from his duties although it has slowed him down a little and certainly been a trial for him. I appreciated

him sending out an email since several of you had called to inquire and he needed to let family know just what was happening. He was going to see Dr. Taylor today and get some idea of where we go from here. Randy did some investigating on the subject of prostatitis and said the most important advice he could give daddy was, "Be patient. It takes a long time to recover from it and there isn't much to do in the meantime, but endure. Not too encouraging but we appreciated Randy's taking time to check on it for us.

It was fun having Tim here for part of the weekend. We fed Shane, Chad, and Tim and their dates Saturday night after they spent the afternoon horseback riding and visiting a potato cellar. Two of the girls (one from North Carolina and the other from Kansas) were absolutely in awe of all the potatoes but Shane's date was from Ririe and had seen it all before. They were here before they went to the spud cellar and the last thing I said to them was, "Don't get stuck!" It has been unseasonably warm and the frost has gone out of the ground. Later when they returned, they admitted that they had gotten into some mud and most of them had to push while Shane drove the car out. Everyone seemed to enjoy the date, though, and it was fun to have the group here for supper.

Following meetings on Sunday we finally all arrived home and had a chance to sit and visit with Tim. His work load has been reduced and he is seeing a difference already in his studies. He is enjoying school although his roommate situation is less than ideal. They have one roommate who seems to be mad at the world and does his best to make the rest of them miserable, too. But, aside from that, life is good and he is looking forward to his summer job.

Mike called last night and mentioned that the Godfreys have invited him to join them at Nauvoo for a special dance for the Academy on Friday. He was elated since his branch has a baptism assignment on Saturday at noon and he can dovetail the two activities together, even getting in an endowment session Saturday morning before the members of the branch arrive. Bishop and Brenda even offered their hide-a-bed for his use. It is so sweet of them! He's excited and hoping that he can shake a bad cold that he has contracted these last few days.

I have been worrying about Grandma Ilene. At her doctor visit last week, she was diagnosed with "shingles", a nerve disease. I remember Grandma

Barbara having shingles once and it was miserable for her. It is so painful and there isn't much the doctors can do to help—it seems to have to wear itself out. Mom has had trouble sleeping because of the pain and although they have given her sleeping pills and pain killers, she is still struggling. I'm going to make a trip to Salt Lake to help out. Kathy is scheduled for surgery the first week in March. I called to visit with her yesterday and we spent the time talking about Mom's condition, her upcoming surgery and Daddy's problems. We both admitted that they're a pretty sorry bunch right now.

The ward is going skiing tonight and we are going to have an early supper and get to the ski resort early and not stay too late. It's one of SaraKay's favorite things to do. Steph and Linds and family have a resort about 45 minutes away that they visited yesterday and it was a fun day for them all.

[Dad] I am scheduled for TURP surgery Thursday. Apparently the surgery is one day. They take out the catheter the next day and if everything comes out alright (pun intended) you can go home the next day. I recall my Dad telling me about having that surgery a number of years ago and he is going strong—I hope I can as well.

We had ward conferences for three Riverside wards on Sunday. The Thursday night before, we split up with ward leaders and made visits to a number of families that the Bishops felt could use the boost. Following those visits, as a presidency we visited each of the bishops in their homes, visited with their wives and children and then closed with a kneeling prayer and blessing on their home and family. Those were truly sweet visits!! The three bishops involved were James Thalgott, Randy Ruger, and Robert Stokes. Bishop Thalgott probably has the biggest challenge because of the number of inactive families in his ward, but he is doing a wonderful job and truly loves the people and they know it.

Monday I spent most of the day working on taxes. It was very discouraging because it looks like we are going to have to come up with some more money instead of getting a refund this year. Monday night we worked on 72-hour kits and replenished our packs and added a few items that we didn't include when we did them originally. It feels good to have that quick emergency pack ready to go at a moment's notice.

Last Saturday I had to go to Pocatello for an executive Wood Badge meeting. We sure have some excellent Course Directors for the four

courses we are holding this year and Dr. Ben Call is a great leader over the council's efforts on Wood Badge. Wednesday night was our semi-annual stake priesthood leadership meeting. We reemphasized the importance of record keeping for the Duty to God program and had some testimonials on how it should work and is working in some wards. As I concluded I mentioned that we truly are in a war, battling for the souls of men. Elder Eyring gave a great talk just over a year ago. I would like to share two paragraphs from that talk: *"The world in which our students choose spiritual life or death is changing rapidly. When their older brothers and sisters return to visit the same school and campuses they attended, they find a radically different moral climate. The language in the hallways and the locker rooms has coarsened. Clothing is less modest. Pornography has moved into the open. Tolerance for wickedness has not only increased, but much of what was called wrong is no longer condemned at all and may, even by our students, be admired. Parents and administrators have in many cases bent to the pressures coming from a shifting world to retreat from moral standards once widely accepted. The spiritual strength sufficient for our youth to stand firm just a few years ago will soon not be enough. Many of them are remarkable in their spiritual maturity and in their faith. But even the best of them are solely tested. And the testing will become more severe."* Words of a prophet!!! We pray for each of you in teaching and training our precious grandchildren. Love, Dad

February 25, 2003

[Mom] I thought that we would be late this week getting the family letter out since Daddy and I were supposed to be in Jackson Hole today and tomorrow for a retreat with the professional scouters. But Daddy was up most of the night, feeling miserable with a sore throat and terrible cough. He felt it start to come on last Saturday and it has gotten progressively worse, despite his efforts to medicate and keep warm. Finally, this morning he called his boss and told him that we wouldn't be coming. We were both disappointed that it didn't work out to go, but we're determined to put everything aside and have him ready for his surgery Thursday.

I spent Friday night and Saturday with Grandma Ilene in Salt Lake. SaraKay and I left here about 2:30 and arrived about 6 p.m. on Friday after a pleasant and uneventful trip. We had supper together and then watched a little TV and visited until bedtime. Saturday morning, we helped with

some vacuuming and dusting and got ready to go to the store for some groceries. Before we went, Grandma got sick with nausea again and began throwing up. She couldn't get her stomach to settle so SaraKay and I went ahead and did the shopping without her. Later we were going to visit Grandpa's grave but there was such a snow storm and winds that Kathy suggested that we wait until the weather wasn't so bad. After lunch we headed for home. I felt badly that Grandma hadn't been well enough to get out and have a break from things, but she just wasn't up to it. When I called her yesterday, she was still struggling with the flu although the pain from the shingles was subsiding and she was encouraged about that.

David called last night and mentioned that they have had a spell of flu and colds these past weeks and are ready for warmer weather and spring to arrive. We visited a little about the situation with Micron in Boise. They employ over 8,000 people in the Boise area and announced last week that they would be laying off 1100 in the near future! That's a lot of people out of work and it certainly makes one grateful to have a job and a measure of security in these troubled times.

Last night on chat Angela was on with Mike so I didn't get a chance to ask about his weekend experience with the Godfreys but apparently the dance was cancelled at the last minute so that didn't work out like he had hoped. I'm sure that Saturday was special with the opportunity to get to attend both a session and a baptism. We were late getting on chat and so we didn't get a chance to talk through that part of it with them like we would have liked to.

Last evening Becky and kids joined us for a few hours after we finished up our meetings for the day. It has been a couple of weeks since we've seen them and I couldn't believe how much older the kids all seemed. Larsen is sitting up and crawling all over and getting into things. He is also starting to support himself more on his legs if you hold him in an upright position. Chet is within a couple weeks of finishing up his first year MBA studies and will be grateful to have another semester successfully completed. I don't know if he waits until fall to start the second year or if he begins on it immediately following the second semester. He has ordered a bunch of gardening seeds and supplies and is making his plans for the upcoming season.

[Dad] Through some reading I have done lately, I became aware of a couple verses in Moroni-his

father's greeting in one of his letters to him-that I felt inspired to include as my greeting to you. *"My beloved [children], I rejoice exceedingly that your Lord Jesus Christ hath been mindful of you, and hath called you to his ministry, and to his holy work. I am mindful of you always in my prayers, continually praying unto God the Father in the name of his Holy Child, Jesus, that he, through his infinite goodness and grace, will keep you through the endurance of faith on his name to the end."* (Moroni 8:2-3)

Those verses are from my heart. I rejoice exceedingly in each of you and your callings in His holy work. And I also continually pray for each of you to be kept in the faith to the end.

These feelings were probably accentuated this last weekend through the involvement in cousin Tom's funeral. It was a joy to sing with Rick and Gary as we sang the opening and closing songs-"How Great Thou Art" and "Nearer My God to Thee" respectively. With my sore throat I had to stick to the bass line, but it came out alright and we had a lot of compliments.

It was sweet to feel the love Tom's children have for him and their knowledge of his love for them regardless of problems or failings. His 18-year-old son said his only regret was not telling his dad he loved him and kissing him good night the night before he died. He said he has done that every night, but that night his dad was on his hands and knees cleaning the bathroom just working through the pain, and he rather peremptorily said good night and went to bed.

The next morning, he was the one that stumbled upon his dad on the floor and found him dead. I was also sweet to feel the depth of Uncle Reid's testimony as he uttered the family prayer-despite the inactivity and avowed alienation with the Church of late. Besides Tom's siblings, Gary and Rick and I were the only other cousins there visiting during the dinner after the funeral. That was kind of sad. But the ward and relatives and friends really rallied and there was a good crowd at the funeral. There were two things they did that really added to the funeral. They had a bagpipe playing as we departed from the church and they used a horse drawn wagon as the hearse to carry the casket to the cemetery.

Healthwise, we are just focusing on getting through my scheduled surgery on Thursday. It is a challenge to keep up with most of my work responsibilities and church assignments with feeling like I have. I appreciate your faith and

prayers in my behalf and know the power that is there. It was interesting to find out that Gary is going through some of the same things I am going through and met my doctor, Tim Taylor, within a week of when I first met with him.

Let me close with a couple more verses from Mormon as they echo my feelings for you. *"My [children], be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever. And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his power, until all things shall become subject unto him, be, and abide with you forever. Amen."* Love, DAD

March 5, 2003

[Mom] We just arrived home from the hospital and Daddy is sleeping. He felt glad to be released today but by the time he changed into his regular clothes and we got home, he was worn out. I'm hoping that he will take it easy for a few days and not get too anxious to be up and about. We have so appreciated everyone's support. It really means a lot at times like this.

I also appreciate the family letters we have received from several of you. It's nice to have that contact with each other. Grandma Ilene called several times, checking on Daddy's progress. She is still battling shingles and has been discouraged. The doctor told her that it's going to be a while before she feels much relief. Aunt Kathy had surgery yesterday and she is doing well and probably will be released from the hospital today.

I have been very involved preparing for a regional Laurel Conference on the 15th. They asked me to speak on job hunting, college funding, budgeting, etc. It has been an enormous project trying to decide what to say, getting handouts ready, interviewing counselors, and doing research at the library. I'm still working on it and feel like I haven't had a minute to spare the last few weeks as I try to find time to study for Gospel Doctrine each Sunday and fit in this other stuff whenever I can. I'll be grateful to have it completed and feel like I'm ready. That same day SaraKay has piano festival and her pieces have a long way to go to be ready. I can feel the tension building. This week is her Jazz tournament and then her involvement

there will be over, so hopefully that will free up a little more time, too.

SaraKay and I both caught Daddy's cold last weekend and had a miserable couple of days, but we're both feeling better now and grateful that it wasn't any worse than it was. There have been a lot of children absent at school, sick, and so I know that others are going through the same thing. Hopefully you and your families will be able to stay well.

March 11, 2003

[Mom] It doesn't seem possible that Daddy's surgery was just a week ago today. He has done so well with his recovery! Thanks to all of you for your faith and prayers. My sis, Kathy, is also doing well and grateful to be on this side of last week. Grandma Ilene called with the news that Don and Lisa's little Riley is in the hospital with pneumonia. She was admitted on Friday. She doesn't understand what is going on and is fighting the tubes and paraphernalia so Lisa has stayed right with her in the hospital, sleeping on a cot by the crib. I'm sure that she would appreciate your faith and prayers.

It was fun on our anniversary to have some of you call to wish us well. I seldom remember anybody's anniversary but my own, so it was a surprise to have some of you call. It was the first time we've celebrated it with Dad in the hospital but it was such a relief to have the surgery over and Daddy on the mend that I didn't even mind.

A few minutes ago I received a call from my friend, Annette, who was in my group in high school and who now lives in Provo. She said that she was thinking about the day that I got engaged and how they (my roommates) had all marched around the living room chanting, "March forth to March fourth!"

We had a sweet visit about our families and how rewarding life has been. She expressed appreciation for my friendship and for the many good times we shared. She said that she often thinks of what good support and examples we were to each other during those formative years and continues to be grateful that we had each other. Amen. Good friends are a wonderful gift at any time of life and my life has certainly been blessed by many.

I am going with SaraKay to mutual tonight to work on a humanitarian project. It should be fun. My preparations for the Laurel conference are almost complete thanks to Daddy's help and computer

expertise. I'll be grateful to have it completed. It has been an enormous task but I feel good about what information I'm giving out and hope that it will be well received. Tim is on a returned missionary panel and will join us for part of the day and we are looking forward to that. Have a good week! Love, Mom

[Dad] Another thank you for your faith and prayers during my health crisis. I am grateful to have the surgery behind me. I am recovering well and feeling great. Last Thursday I pushed too hard and felt the effects and had to lie down for an hour or so to be able to carry on and go to my meeting that night. I took it a little slower on Friday and have felt fine since. It is easy to forget how traumatic surgery and anesthesia is to one's body and nerves. I didn't particularly enjoy the hospital food though they were very solicitous and gave me choices. Probably my favorite meal was the final one before I left for home- macaroni & cheese and stewed tomatoes. I was very satisfied with the quality of care and the competence of the nurses who attended to my every need in the hospital. However, it was sure good to come home on Wednesday afternoon and turn myself over to the care of my favorite nurse.

Saturday was a rather slow day as we just went to three tournament ball games for SaraKay. The first game her team won by a long way and she got 9 points. The second game was with the only team that had beat them all year and they won it by one point. SaraKay did a good job but was mostly in a support role with her defense and not much of a powerhouse on offence. Becky and kids came for the third game which SaraKay's team won by two points despite being at a distinct height disadvantage. It was fun to have Becky and her kids here--the only problem is that it accentuates how much I miss the other grandkids that are farther away and we don't get to see as often. We certainly feel blessed with the wonderful kids and grandkids that Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care.

Sunday was a pretty typical Sunday with meetings, choir practice, home teachers, recommend signing and chat. Only two people came for the recommend signing time. Chat was a lot of fun as usual and I am always grateful for modern technology that allows us that kind of communication and interaction. Yesterday was a full staff meeting all day and I had a presentation on effective habits to reach our goals. I based my presentation on the 15 points of a memo from J. Willard Marriott to his son, Bill Marriott. It went

over very well. For FHE we went to the production of South Pacific put on by the Blackfoot Community Players at the Nuart in Blackfoot. Our neighbor, Ron Mangum, was one of the stars and we felt we should support him. It was a great show, well produced and executed. I think the last time we saw that show was when Shauntel, Randy, and his mom were in it as a regional LDS production.

March 18, 2003

[Mom] Happy St. Patrick's Day! Hopefully you all wore green and didn't get pinched. When I arrived this morning at school it dawned on me that I had totally forgotten that it was "green" day and so I quickly found a piece of green yarn and tied it around my wrist. Much to my surprise, no one said much about it being a holiday and I was only threatened once before I quickly revealed my green wristband. I kept worrying about SaraKay because I knew she hadn't worn any green either.

When she arrived home from school this afternoon, I questioned her and she looked at me in the most condescending way and said, "Mom. We are in junior high! No one does that stuff at our age!" Well so much for the generation gap!

This past weekend was a busy one. On Saturday morning Daddy and I accompanied SaraKay to her festival performance. She did well and received a score of 100. Because of this, she was invited to try out for scholarships at two that afternoon. Tim was arriving about noon since he had been invited to take part on a returned missionary panel at the Laurel conference so after SaraKay and Daddy helped me set up my room at the stake center, he and SaraKay came home, changed clothes, got Tim, delivered SaraKay to her basketball bowling party, and then they came and sat in on one of my sessions before lunch. It was fun to have them there. I was pleased with the response I received from those who attended my sessions. My only regret was that I didn't have more time, but fortunately I had most of my information on handouts so that which I didn't cover, they were able to get in the materials I gave out. It was very satisfying for me to be able to participate in the event, but I'm grateful that it is over.

Following lunch, Daddy and I picked up SaraKay at the bowling alley, and we went to scholarship tryouts which lasted almost two- and one-half hours....one hour of that just waiting for the judges to make up their minds. As you can imagine, we were really tired by the time it was over. SaraKay got first alternate. There were 19 contestants, six

winners and four alternates so we were very pleased that she did so well.

The rest of the day we just relaxed with Tim and enjoyed ourselves. It doesn't seem possible that he will soon be leaving for Texas. I wish we could talk him out of it but he feels like he needs to go and see if he can make some good money. He is going with a bunch of good guys so that makes us feel a little better about it. He is doing well in school although he had an upsetting day Friday when he received word that he wouldn't be graduating from BYU because he had taken the wrong Humanities class. He had conferred with two advisors prior to registering for the class and had received bad advice. The committee told him to appeal his case but not to expect to have them change their minds. Today he called and said that his petition must have swayed the committee because he received word that three of the four members had signed it and there was only one member left to go. What a relief for him to not have to take a summer course to make up for the one he missed.

(Tues.) I picked up SaraKay at school this afternoon and we made a quick trip to Pocatello to do some shopping. When I arrived home Daddy informed me that the Charter school had called and said that the building we have been meeting in has been condemned and that school is officially dismissed until March 31st. We were going to be out some of next week for spring break anyway, but this definitely was a shock to all of us. A few weeks ago the principal hired a contractor to come look at the building regarding some remodeling that we were going to do and at that time some cracks in the foundation and in the west wall were discovered.

In response to this concern, another specialist was brought in and he confirmed that the damage to the building is serious enough that he advised we vacate. I am going to enjoy having a few days to get ready for Woman's Week. I am going to spend Thursday night with Deniece and then go to classes with Tim on Friday, returning late that night. I am so excited! Also, I am going to go to Salt Lake after our meetings on Sunday and spend a couple days with Mom. I've told her to come up with some projects for me to do while I'm there. She is still sick with shingles, but she said that some days are better than others and she feels like she is seeing some improvement.

Alva Lu is going in for surgery on Thursday. She would appreciate your faith and prayers in her

behalf. I know that it will be hard for Allan to be without her but they have located a nice facility where he can stay for the two weeks that she will be with her sister, recovering. Our prayers are with them both.

In closing let me mention that Saturday morning before we left for our day, Daddy gave SaraKay and me each a beautiful blessing. It was a sweet experience to have that additional help after we had both prepared so carefully for the day's events. In my blessing he told me that the Lord appreciated my efforts on behalf of the youth in the area. That meant so much to me. I've always felt like I shortchanged myself by not developing my musical talents and his blessing gave me some comfort and helped me realize that through my speaking assignments I have been able to contribute.

I best go. We love each one of you and pray that your lives will be rich and full. I know that Mike, Randy and Shauntel and Paul and Jenny were in Nauvoo today together. What fun! Our prayers have been for President Bush and his advisers and for all those gathered in the Gulf area anticipating war. It is a frightening prospect and one we continue to pray about. May the Lord's watchcare be over us all. Mom

[Dad] Life is full and never seems to slow down here. Last Tuesday I prepared the monthly newsletter for Rotary and handed it out at Rotary. Wednesday was Roundtable and we had a great turnout and I was able to get a lot accomplished until I fell down the steps in the church in which we were meeting. You can tell I am truly following in my father's footsteps, but probably doing things a little earlier age-wise. Luckily, I didn't break anything--just stretched some things in my knees.

Thursday night we had ward conference visits with families in the Moreland 3rd and 6th wards. Following those visits, as a stake presidency we visited each of the bishops with their families and had a kneeling prayer of blessing on their home and family. What special experiences we have had with those visits--I know they mean a lot to the bishops and their families.

Friday night we had a quiet night at home and watched a video from Cleanflicks. Saturday was a full day with SaraKay's festival performance and then the scholarship tryouts from 2-4pm. Sue did a great job on her seminar for Laurel Conference and gave them some wonderful information on planning, getting jobs, resources available for college and so on. She had worked almost every

waking moment for the last couple of weeks on researching and pulling together appropriate and timely information. Tim and I were able to slip in to her last presentation and were thoroughly impressed with her information. During the lunch they had a panel of returned missionaries, one of which was Tim, to answer a bunch of questions they had compiled about missions, dating, and so on. Tim did a great job and exhibited more depth in his answers than some of the other guys.

Sunday was a wonderful day with ward conferences in Moreland 3rd at 8:30 and Moreland 6th at 11:00. These conferences have really been wonderful and we have had the opportunity to hear some great talks from ward members and the stake leadership in that two-hour block. Tim went with Sue and I to speak at the Moreland 3rd ward youth fireside and was very complementary of the job we did.

I found out last week that Alva Lu is going to have to have surgery this Thursday and it will take a couple weeks of bed rest to recover. Keep her in your prayers. And pray for Dad too. He will have to be in a limited care facility while Alva Lu is recovering and I know it will be hard on him. But he is just too far away for us to be able to cover for that length of time.

March 26, 2003

[Dad] Last Thursday I went to the doctor for my post operation checkup. He said I was one of the lucky ones--just about every one he has operated on over the last three months has had cancer. He said I could resume all my normal activities. I had already started working into my exercise and bike routine and getting back up to speed. It has certainly been a blessing and a testament of your prayers and my priesthood blessing that the operation was a success and I have been able to bounce back so fast. Thanks to each of you for keeping in touch and showing your interest and concern.

With work I have been spending more time with my new man that I am training. He is taking care of three districts and is getting his feet under him and doing well. I forget how much detail there is that needs to be learned to be able to effectively and efficiently do this job. I am convinced that the three most important elements of success are: 1) relationships, 2) relationships, and 3) relationships.

Last Wednesday for High Council meeting, we had invited all the bishops to come because of some

special training with regard to missionary work. President Shipley had met with President Johnson, the mission president and Elder Rollie Walker, an Area Authority Seventy the previous week. From that meeting he brought back a lot of direction and insight regarding how the councils of the ward should be used to focus on missionary work. Without adding any meetings for the Bishop, he discussed how a member of each presidency and group leadership--preferably the president--should have a missionary responsibility. Each week as they come together for PEC or Ward Council, a portion of those meetings should be focused on missionary work. The Bishop needs to think like a mission president. Each auxiliary and priesthood head is like a zone leader over the missionaries in their organization. As we implement this expanded vision, I am sure we will be much more effective as member missionaries. The responsibility is ours to find and cultivate and to drive the work and for the full-time missionaries to teach.

Friday night and Saturday, I had a Wood Badge staff development in Idaho Falls. I was impressed again with the inspiration of this great program and its effectiveness in touching lives of leaders and kids.

We hated to have Sue leave us Sunday afternoon to go to SLC but it was a good window of opportunity for her to go and spend some time with her mother and do some deep cleaning for her. SaraKay and I bumped along and were able to have a good time together. For FHE we watched "Signs" together and then got started on her pinewood derby car. It has been fun to work on that project together and she is excited to see her car coming together.

[Mom] I thought that I would give you a quick health update. Alva Lu had her surgery last Thursday and has been staying with her sister in St. George for the recovery time. This week her daughter who lives in Cedar City is going to help her for a few days. The recovery is going to be slow. The doctor told her that she couldn't lift anything for several weeks or she could end up right back in the hospital. We're grateful that she has some help during this time and our prayers continue for her. Grandpa Larsen fell a few days ago and cut his head. He was standing, visiting with someone in a wheelchair and he went to move out of the way for someone else to pass by and his feet got tangled up in the wheels and he toppled over.

Fortunately he didn't break anything but he did get a gash on the back of his head. He seemed in pretty good spirits when Daddy talked to him last night. I'm sure this is a difficult time for him, but he is making the best of it.

Grandma Ilene is doing much better. It was so nice to spend a few days with her, visiting, shopping, and doing some cleaning. When I was there last month, I noticed her laundry room was pretty crowded and we agreed that when I came this month, I would help her get it organized. I was able to hang some things for her, clean, and wash out the cupboards. We also went shopping for items that she has needed for a while. The weather was beautiful. I arrived home about 2:30 yesterday and felt good about my trip. It's so nice to have a good car that will get me there and back and the freedom to do this for her. As Daddy recounted, he is doing well and grateful to be on the mend. His work keeps him so busy, but I think he enjoys it and feels like he is appreciated.

SaraKay had violin festival in Pocatello yesterday with her strings class. In preparation for it, Linnea held a concert last Thursday night and let the solos and ensembles perform for the parents. It was amazing to see the progress the kids have made! Thursday night after the concert I left for Rexburg and spent the night with Don and Deniece. I had hoped to arrive early enough that Deniece and I would have some visiting time, but because of the strings concert I was delayed and didn't arrive until nearly ten. We visited for a few minutes but I knew that I had to meet Tim at 6:30 for his first class so we went right to bed.

The next morning I drove to Tim's apartment and we took his parking permit and parked on campus for the day. I attended his accounting, physical science, humanities, computer, and business communications classes with him.

Between classes we studied in the library and grabbed a quick sandwich for lunch. It was very enjoyable to accompany him and meet his professors and sit in on their lectures. We saw several students from Snake River and a few of their mothers.

Following his last class, we returned to his apartment to watch the last of the U of U game. They won but it was a tight game right up to the final buzzer. When they won, Tim and Shane both went wild, hooting and hollering! (I thought I would let Kathy and Dick know that we put prejudice aside once a year and cheer for their alma mater) After the game we went out to dinner and then

attended the Extravagance performance. Part way through I looked over at Tim and he looked as tired as I felt! I mentioned to him that we had worn ourselves out having so much fun together! He agreed and said that he had been so excited about me coming that he kept waking up all night, checking the alarm, worrying that he would sleep through it. I had to laugh because I had done the same thing. Anyway, it was a wonderful time for me to share with him and I returned home feeling so pleased with the day.

Tomorrow I will be helping our school get moved to a location in the Riverside Plaza. It will be nice to have it closer to home for me and interesting to see how it all works out. I have enjoyed my vacation this week and hope that I can get some spring cleaning done today and Friday before returning to work on Monday. I wish the weather was nicer. The yard and garden are calling to me but it is hard to want to work outside when the wind is at gale speed and the wind chill factor is -5. Seriously, it isn't quite that cold but nearly.

Thanks to all of you who are writing letters. We love hearing from you. The pictures are an added bonus. Yesterday when I called Steph's to talk through General Conference weekend, I got Sam on the line. When I asked him if his mother was there, he said, "No, Grandma, she is "out and about" with Katie." I then asked him if the ground was drying enough that they could get out and work in the yard and he said, "No, we live in a bog!" It reminded me of the time he was visiting here and we were surface irrigating the pasture and he looked out and said to me, "Grandma, I didn't know you lived by some wetlands!" I better go. We love you and echo Laurel's sentiments regarding our concern and prayers for those in the military and in positions of leadership. Love, Mom

April 2, 2003

[Mom] Yesterday we finished moving into our new location for the Charter School. It is a large complex of offices in the Riverside Plaza. When they condemned our building, I wondered how in the world we would find another building but they did and we moved in the last of the stuff yesterday. Today the students are due back and I'm sure we'll have a wild day with all the changes and adjustments. Fortunately we did get the classrooms in order and ready for the kids.

Although last week was crazy, I was able to get the things done I wanted to. I spent Monday and Tuesday with Grandma Ilene, got the garden ready to be rototilled and the berries cleaned out, and

Daddy and I went to the temple. On Saturday we had a stake humanitarian day sponsored by the Relief Society and SaraKay and I attended that together. It was heart-warming to see the wonderful quilts, baby blankets, school packets, and block kits that will all go to the needy. Sara Kay commented as she was painting the children's blocks, that it was awesome to think that in a while those same blocks would be in the hands of a needy child, somewhere in the world.

The YW and YM stake leaders are also sponsoring a similar service project for the young people in the stake and I went a week ago to mutual with SaraKay and worked on the kits that our ward is putting together. Our neighbor, Derik Hanni, for his Eagle project, gathered used clothing and supplies to send to our humanitarian missionaries, Brother and Sister Acevedo. When all was said and done, he collected nearly 2000 pounds of supplies. Viking Trucking offered to ship them free of charge. Derik distributed fliers to the ward and neighborhood and Melanie said that everyone was very generous, members and nonmembers alike. I'm so grateful for the church's efforts to relieve the suffering in the world.

Friday afternoon Daddy and I went to the temple. Although Daddy had gone while he was in St. George with Grandpa in January, because of his health problems we had not been back since. It was so sweet to anticipate being in the temple and to have the day (spring break) to prepare things here at home so that it was easy to leave. On the way to the temple Daddy commented that his mind was whirling with work concerns and he hoped he would be able to settle down and focus enough to enjoy the session. It usually it takes me well into the session before I can get my mind to focus instead of rehashing my day. When we got into the session, I was amazed at how quickly I felt the Spirit and how focused I was able to stay. I have decided that it was because I have spent so much time lately studying the scriptures and I have really felt the Spirit stronger than usual. Or maybe it was because the lady that I was proxy for was really receptive.

I have loved studying the life of the Savior in Gospel Doctrine. This time as I have studied the accounts, I have come to realize more than ever just how much of sorrow, fatigue, grief, and disappointment He felt. Even those closest to him failed to grasp what he was all about. That must have been such a challenge for him to feel that he wasn't understood or appreciated. I am dreading the coming weeks as we cover the time of the

Atonement. It has always been hard to review the terrible events leading up to his crucifixion.

Our prayers continue for Grandpa Larsen and Alva Lu. This is a very challenging time for them. It is hard for Grandpa to be out of his own home and away from Alva Lu, but he is trying to be patient and give her the time she needs to heal. Daddy tries to keep close touch with him. We have been through this with my Dad and we know how tough it can be. Alva Lu's daughter, Kim, was able to come for a few days and help her with her recovery. Please keep them in your prayers.

I thought I would close this letter with a short story Grandma Ilene told me during my visit there last week. She said that her father, Nathan Robinson, was the kindest man she ever knew. She never remembered him raising his voice or laying a hand on her or her brothers except on one occasion. The family owned a milk cow during the depression and it was her brother's responsibility to keep her fed and watered. One morning before leaving for work, Nathan noticed that the water trough was empty and he told the boys to be sure to get the trough filled so the cow would have water.

Well, as boys will, they got involved and totally forgot the cow. When her dad got home that evening from work and found out that the cow had gone without water all day, he spanked the boys and scolded them for making the cow suffer. That was the only time she ever saw him spank her brothers. (She did comment that Grandma Gooch spanked them all enough for both parents)

Another incident she related was that during the Depression, there were a lot of men around who couldn't find work. She said that there was a large old Negro who would come to their back door and say, "Mrs. Robinson, I saw Mr. Robinson at the rail yard and he said that if I would come here, that you would give me something to eat."

Grandma Gooch would have him sit down on the back steps and she would fix him something. He never went away hungry. Grandpa and Grandma had both had enough of want and trouble that they were very kind and giving. I thought that you would enjoy those stories. You have a rich heritage and ancestors who truly set an example in many, many ways!

[Dad] President Shipley was out of town Sunday so we didn't have presidency meeting and I was able to go to Idaho Falls and help with the kids while Becky and Chet talked. They gave wonderful

talks on the theme of "Following the Light." The kids were great, but I felt like I should have worn a pair of coveralls to survive an hour and a half with Larsen. I had forgotten what it is like and what many of you are going through with your young families. I was also reminded of the Superwoman I am married to and her great accomplishments with our family, usually with me on the stand or elsewhere, rather than in the trenches with her during Sunday meetings. How grateful I am for Sue and what a great example she is for each of you.

Our choir has been revitalized as we are working to prepare to sing in stake conference on Easter weekend. The only trouble is, one of the songs we are singing has a male solo which our conductor has asked me to sing--scary!! Because of a lack of tenors, I have been singing that part on our conference numbers and it has been pretty satisfying to balance with five or six basses.

Saturday was the Council Venturing Olympics--supposedly under the direction of the youth in the Venturing Officers Association. Their advisor was out of town and only part of them showed up. It was a good thing I had done a lot of thinking about what if and had all the medals, equipment, paperwork, and so forth ready. We had about 65 there and all in all was quite a good activity. We had to forgo some of the events because we just didn't have enough leadership to run them all.

The management of the District has been going well and we are recruiting some new people to replace vacancies and volunteers that are going on missions, etc. We have almost made 100% of our fair share of Friends of Scouting. I just need to be able to start some new viable units and involve more boys to really make my mark with my employment role. Some good things are happening in the other districts I supervise and I feel good about my men and what they are doing.

As a council we are working toward a major event--the Jamboral-- to be held the first weekend in May. It will be a great extravaganza with around 10-12,000 participants. It is the closest thing to a jamboree that most kids will ever experience. We have been working towards having a high COPE--zip line and cable or ropes course as well as some lower COPE segments with team building and confidence building elements. It looks like that is all going to come to pass. One other thing we will have for the older boys is the opportunity to shoot the semi-automatic rifles that are used by security at the site.

One of the overriding concerns of late has been my dad. Alva Lu had some surgery and time to recover so it seemed the best alternative for Dad was to be in a care facility in St. George. The risks for Dad being alone and the risks for Alva Lu if she had to care for Dad while she was recovering were too great to have him stay at home. Naturally, he would much prefer to be at home with his own things and habits and ways of doing things. They have treated him well at the Atria and fed him well, but he is anxious to get back into his home. At the same time, Alva Lu is still very fragile—physically and emotionally. We just need to help Dad be patient through these trying times.

April 8, 2003

[Mom] Our weekend in Utah was wonderful. We left here on Thursday afternoon and arrived about 6:30 at the Eccles Theatre in downtown Logan. Rachel was performing with her third-grade class in an original opera. It was a treat for us to be able to be there to see her in the production. This event is held annually in Logan and gives the children an opportunity to write, choreograph, and compose the music for their presentation. Adults work with them to bring their ideas to life. It was fun seeing what the children came up with. There were two middle school groups and three third grade classes that each presented their operas. We were pleased that our travel plans for the weekend enabled us to be there.

We spent the night with Steph and Linds and family, had a birthday breakfast with Josh before he left for school and then drove to Bear Lake, checking on condos. We left early afternoon for Provo, leaving SaraKay behind to pester the Bennion's for a couple days. We appreciated their willingness to let her stay. We considered splitting the time between the Bennion's of Hyde Park and the Larsen's of Wellsville, but Bonnie was having laser surgery on her eyes on Saturday and we felt like she and Steve didn't need an "extra" around. (Bonnie had the surgery Saturday morning and was under doctor's orders to spend a quiet day recuperating. When we arrived on Sunday for the family dinner, she was chipper and seeing great without glasses or contacts!)

We arrived in Provo about six and grabbed a quick bite before delivering Tim to his mission reunion on campus. Daddy and I went to a session in the Provo temple and then picked Tim up about 9:45 from his reunion. He had a wonderful time and it was fun to have him rehearse to us who he saw and what the program was. His first mission

president and wife attended from Arizona, although their flight was an hour late so they weren't there for the full evening.

Saturday morning we left Provo, picked up some lunch items, and stopped by to visit Grandma Ilene and watch the morning session of conference with her. Following lunch Daddy dropped Tim and I off near the Conference Center and he drove to the Hilton where we had reservations for that night. Tim had not been to the Conference Center except the one time he sang in the MTC choir just prior to leaving on his mission. We had great seats and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to be together. My only regret was that we didn't have time to stroll around the Conference Center and let Tim see all the beautiful art work that is displayed. Following conference, we walked to the Hilton and joined Daddy. It was so fun to have Tim with us and have some good one-on-one with him before he heads to Texas for four months.

Daddy, Tim, and President Shipley attended the Priesthood Session together and then we went to the Olive Garden for a late supper. They were so busy that we didn't finish our meal until almost ten! Thank goodness we had salad and bread sticks to hold us until the meal was served! Seriously though, we loved visiting with the Shipley's and Tim and it felt wonderful to sit and not feel like we had something pressing.

Sunday morning we drove to Steve and Bonnie's and listened with them to the last hour of the morning session. Steph and I had made a deal with Bonnie that if she would furnish the house, we would furnish the meal and at noon the Bennion's arrived and we had dinner with the bunch. Steph has a great recipe for enchilada soup that she had prepared and between the three families we had a delicious meal and great time. By the time 2 o'clock rolled around, we were on our way home and able to catch the final session of conference enroute. We were grateful for all the wonderful times we had shared and for the chance to participate in another great conference!

Tonight for home evening we cut out around some of the pine trees and burned some corn stalks. Daddy is trying to take it a little easier since he has been having some problems that the doctor thinks are related to his surgery and jumping back in to things too quickly. He is not supposed to lift anything heavier than his shoe and that is quite a challenge considering how heavy his briefcase is.

Grandpa Larsen is frustrated with being away from his home so long, but he will be getting a phone in his room at the Atria on Tuesday so we will give out that number as soon as we get it. I know he would love to hear from you.

[Dad] The operas on Thursday night were quite interesting. The 7th grade ones were translated into French, but the kids were a lot more inhibited in their acting and singing than the 3rd graders. I enjoyed the three 3rd grader's operas most of all. They got into the action a lot more and even had a better sense of pitch on their singing. It was hard to believe that they had come up with the story, the set, the choreography, and the music on their own. Rachel was one of several princesses and did a great job. You could tell she knew every word and action and was thinking on stage. While at Bonnie and Steve's we saw a video that I hadn't seen before of Steve, Mike, Paul, Tim and Kimball singing a song and playing their make-believe guitars and dancing. It was awesome and fun to watch how much they really got into it. Also, while we were at Steph and Linds' we saw a video of SaraKay's second birthday. My, how things change in 10 years!

We thoroughly enjoyed conference even though we weren't as settled to watch and listen to it all as I would like. We were able to get a lot of mileage out of our weekend with the family time and even a temple session. I can't remember when we had last been in the Provo Temple. It was a sweet, calming way to spend the evening. It made us feel old though, because of all the young couples that filled the temple that night. Because of my operation I was always concerned about where a restroom was and how far I was from it.

It was great to be able to have the time with Tim. We even saw Mark as we entered the Conference Center for the priesthood meeting. He was with his bishopric from Denver and we were able to see him long enough for a hug and a short howdy-do. I can't help comparing the Conference Center with my memories of going to conference in the tabernacle and being squeezed in like sardines and how close the benches were for my long legs. The closer proximity to the brethren and the intimacy of seeing them in person rather than on a big screen is one of the prices of growth. I remember some of the brethren, like Elder Perry for example, roaming the aisles and shaking hands with as many as he could reach during the waiting before the conference sessions began.

Chat on Sunday night was fun. It seemed like it really came alive when we turned the keyboard over to Tim—he was really clever in some of the things he had to say and how he said them and the responses from the rest of the family.

Yesterday was a full staff meeting in Idaho Falls and I was reminded again of all the things I need to be doing and why I can't afford to be sick or incapacitated because of health problems. Love, DAD

April 16, 2003

[Mom] (Sunday) Following Daddy's meetings this morning, we left for Rexburg to attend Brent's farewell. It was a rather emotional thing for me to be with Deniece and Don and their sweet family and to think of all the years that have come and gone with hardly any interaction because of the distances that have separated us. All of their family was there and several of Don's siblings had made the trip from Utah to be a part of the event. Brent gave a wonderful talk and he concluded with bearing his testimony, a strong witness of the truths of the gospel and of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Before concluding, he expressed his love for his family and for everyone who had come to show support. I couldn't help thinking about what a change their family has had as they have joined the rest of us in the West and become more a part of things.

Prior to the meeting, JoEllen (Mark's youngest) and Tim both joined us. JoEllen knows Brent from a Book of Mormon class and Tim has had frequent interaction with him and Don, as they share an accounting class. I asked JoEllen how she and Brent had ever figured out that they had common cousins and she said that one day they just got to visiting and made the connection. Small world. It was fun to have a minute to visit with her. She will be returning to Denver following the semester and plans to return to BYU_I come fall. She mentioned that Josh and Jeanette (Watson) are expecting a baby. Jo Ellen looked so pretty and seems to be happy with her experience in Rexburg.

Sarah Williams Anderson is also a member of that ward and she and Deniece had made the connection between Deniece and I but Deniece hadn't realized that Sarah was Nyla Harker's daughter. (We both knew Nyla from our Shelley ward) Boy, those relationships go back a long way! (Sarah was one of Shauntel's best friends in high school.)

(Tuesday) It's cold and blustery outside today. We had such wonderful weather all last week that it is hard to see it turn off so cold. I've spent the last couple of hours thinking through our upcoming Easter weekend and planning for having Dave and Andrea and family here with us. Becky and Chet will be here for supper on Friday and then return home to host Chet's family for the weekend. We thought that it would be fun to celebrate Becky and Tate's birthdays while we were gathered. Tim will be coming on Saturday evening and needs to return Sunday morning. He'll leave for Texas next Friday following a day of tests. Mike is loaning him his walkie-talkies so that Tim and a friend can caravan and keep each other company. There is a lot of safety in the buddy system. I'll feel better about things when I know he is safely in Houston.

Daddy's back has bothered him so much that he got a prescription on Saturday. He isn't 100% but the medications have helped. He came home early today to lie down and try to get some relief. His work, as usual, is very demanding. Thank goodness it isn't physical labor.

The news from St. George is that Alva Lu continues to recover and Allan continues to be patient. He has the use of a cell phone but, it can be very frustrating for him since the buttons are so small that he can't figure out which one is for which number.

The good news of the week is that Shaunnie and Randy have sold their home. They were so pleased to get this taken care of; the person buying it is willing to rent it to them until they need to move the end of June so they won't have to move twice. What a relief! Shauntel mentioned to me how dependent they have felt on the Lord these last weeks as they have waded through the many details of preparing the house for sale, showing it, and keeping up with all the other demands. I had to add my testimony to hers that there isn't a day that goes by that I don't find myself "feeling" after the Lord and imploring him for help and wisdom. Of course, sometimes I feel the need greater than others, but for the most part, I recognize that I am supported by His loving watch care every step of the way. We love you. Have a wonderful Easter, complete with a renewal of appreciation for the Savior and His matchless love and infinite Atonement. Mom

[Dad] A week ago we had a "hedgehog day" at work where we paired off for visits in each other's area to prospective new units. I had several good appointments and it looks like my unit and

recruiting prospects are looking better. I need to get the final paperwork and I can revive lapsed units sponsored by the Sheriff's office. I have a new unit sponsored by the Bingham County Juvenile Probation department. I have an appointment to put together a Scout troop with the Spanish Branch--largely due to the efforts of Uncle Gary. I think I mentioned that as a district we are at 101% of our Fair Share of the Friends of Scouting goal and so we are looking pretty good on the money side of my critical achievements. I need to help my two guys do the same in their districts.

One of the couples that I worked with a lot in the Endowment effort was Dr. Merrill Sharp and his wife Winnie. I found out last week that she had died and Kim wanted me to represent the council in attending the viewing or the funeral. It was refreshing to visit with Merrill and his family and extend our love and support at this time of their loss.

Thursday night we had the annual Relief Society dinner with spouses. They had a special guest who talked about the differences between men and women in communicating and the basic concepts of communication. It was really enlightening to hear his viewpoint and recognize some of the basic differences between men and women that leave us wondering why we have difficulty in our relationships. Sue and I didn't agree with all the things he had to say but realized he was talking about men and women in general and each man and woman not necessarily encompassed in those generalities. I believe as we get outside of ourselves and are sincerely more concerned about our spouse than ourselves that many of the obstacles to communication are removed.

Saturday was a busy day beginning with a Commissioner's conference in Idaho Falls. It was a great conference and I learned a lot about the role of unit commissioners. That night we went to Snake River Daze at the High School and enjoyed performances by each of the choral and instrumental groups in the district. SaraKay played her violin with the 7th grade strings group and they sounded great--they have really improved a lot in their skills. Most of the groups just did one number and then they combined for the finale of "Let There Be Peace on Earth" and it was a wonderful evening accented by the great Dutch oven cobbler and ice cream that was a prelude to the talent. Bonnie's sister, Shannon, was the emcee of the event and did a great job!

April 23, 2003

[Mom] Last Thursday I took the day off to get the things done I needed to before I got into the weekend. Part way through the day, I went out the front door to shake some rugs and found a package on the steps from John and Laurel that had been delivered some time that morning. I presumed it was photos and immediately opened it only to find an early Mother's Day gift. John and Laurel have been working the past two years on compiling the history of my grandmother Abby Gooch.

They started the project while they were in Provo and I took the project over when they left for Michigan. When John was here last August, he ask if I had done much on it and I had to admit that I hadn't. He asked if he could take the disk (a scanned copy of the original history) and he said that he would do what he could to work on it. Well, unbeknownst to me, he and Laurel have continued to work on the manuscript, make corrections, subdivide it into chapters, number the pages, and then have it copied onto 8 1/2 by 11-inch sheets and bound together in a book form. They completed the project and presented one to me and another to Grandma Ilene. What a surprise and treasure! The new format is so much more inviting and readable. Grandma Ilene said that when her copy arrived in the mail, she thought to herself, "Grandma Gooch would be so pleased!"

After I got my emotions under control, I called Laurel to express appreciation and was surprised when John answered. He was home early from work so that they could go to an early temple session. He was happy that I was so pleased with the history and mentioned that if others in the extended family are interested, that he can have more copies printed off. The cost would be about \$20 a copy which would include postage. He will be figuring out just exactly what the cost was and let us know. I so appreciate all the hours of work that he and Laurel did to make this beautiful book available to the family.

When David and Andrea arrived and I showed it to them, David said that he had been thinking about the possibility of our family organizing to accomplish some family goals, such as committees for family history, reunions, etc. Andrea's extended family (the Pitchers) have done this and each committee reports on their stewardship at their annual reunions. I know that our families' primary goal right now is to support

each of you children in your pursuit of your schooling and raising your families and so I have hesitated to put too much other on your shoulders, but I would love to hear from you regarding this suggestion.

(Monday) SaraKay and I had today off and it has felt good to have a day to recuperate from our weekend before returning to school. We had a wonderful Easter holiday. David and Andrea arrived on Friday about one o'clock and Becky and Chet got here a couple of hours later. Sara Kay and Laurel hid Easter eggs in the yard and then everyone went on a treasure hunt to find them. It was so cold that we had to bundle everyone up in coats and hats to keep warm. That didn't seem to dampen anyone's spirits, though, and while we finished our preparations for dinner, the kids opened the plastic eggs and enjoyed the candy and small toys. At dinner we celebrated both Becky's and Tate's birthdays with a cute cake Becky had decorated. It was fun to see the interaction between the cousins as the evening progressed. Joseph and Maddie really hit it off.

Although the forecast for Saturday was for more cold weather, by some twist of fate, the day dawned clear and beautiful. David and Andrea ask about helping with some yard work for a couple hours and so I borrowed Hanni's old pickup and David helped me retrieve the riding mower from the repair shop. Before long, the lawn was being mowed, David was digging around the pine trees, SaraKay, Laurel and Angela were pulling weeds and the yard was transformed. Following lunch David burned off the weeds in the windbreak area and Andrea, SaraKay and the girls had cleaned under the last of the back-yard trees. I couldn't believe how wonderful it looked! About that time Daddy returned from his scout Pow wow and other meetings and was thrilled to see the yard looking so spiffy. We so appreciated all their hard work in our behalf!

About 10:30 Friday night I was sitting in the office visiting with Daddy about his upcoming talk and the phone rang. It was President Shipley informing Dad that Bishop Burton, who was to be the conference visitor, had been involved in a minor accident and wouldn't be able to come. What a shock. Everything had been set up around Bishop Burton and now he wouldn't be coming! Early the next morning the stake presidency met to talk over the situation and revamp their meeting plans. One of the things they were going to discuss in the leadership meeting was quorum presidency visits and David had visited with Daddy

on Friday night about his experiences in this area. When the presidency met Saturday morning, they requested that David take a few minutes in the session to tell his success stories. David added to his already busy Saturday, prep time for the talk and made his presentation the next morning. (Daddy said it went great) Hopefully after the working weekend that Dave and Andrea spent with us, they won't avoid coming to visit again. I promise that next time it won't be such a circus around here!

Andrea and I had decided to play "Easter Bunny" for the children on Saturday night before going to the evening session of stake conference. Following supper, while the kids played basketball and frisbee with David, we got the baskets ready and let the kids have them while we went to our meeting. Daddy had been back and forth most of the day to the high school where the scouting professionals were setting up things for the annual Council Recognition Night. I was grateful that for the first time in many years, we weren't the ones in charge of the VIP luncheon for the event.

Daddy had assignments to talk in conference Saturday night and at the priesthood leadership session early Sunday morning and at the new converts meeting that morning also. He kept snatching a minute here and there to complete his preparations and then running over to the high school to deliver flowers, open classrooms, set up the sound equipment, and sundry other tasks.

By six on Saturday Tim arrived from Rexburg to join the party. We were just finishing up supper and trying to get the kids settled so he hurried and changed clothes and went with us to the session. It was special to have some of the kids here to support Daddy for his talks. After the session, David and Andrea came home to get kids to bed, and I helped decorate for the dinner we were hosting on Sunday between sessions of conference.

By late Saturday night the kids had all had so much sugar that we weren't sure we were ever going to get them to settle down. The girls were sleeping in bags on one side of the couch and Joseph was in a bag by the TV. He wanted to sleep in the little tent we had set up but Andrea told him that he had to settle down or he would lose his privilege. While Andrea worked to get Chantelle settled, David prepared his talk, Tim finally got supper, and I lay down by Joseph, trying to help him settle. I told him that if he would close his

eyes and listen quietly that I would tell him a story. Just before the lights were turned off, he found a spool of thread on the floor and he thought it was some kind of yo-yo and so he wanted me to tell him a story of a yo-yo. While I whispered a "tall tale" he played with his miniature yo-yo. I kept thinking that surely he would drop off any minute but every time I thought he was nearly asleep, he would raise up from his pillow and say, "nother story about yo-yo!" It was very dark and I knew that he was playing quietly with the spool of thread, but after a while I realized that he had nearly encased himself in a web of thread. I took the spool and began the process of extricating him from the cocoon, all the time trying not to arouse the other sleeping children. It was quite a task to accomplish in pitch darkness, but true to my Grandmotherly skills, I managed to unravel him and the string and then quietly made my exit.

We enjoyed a wonderful Easter Sunday together although David, Andrea, and Tim were pretty much on their own for dinner since Daddy, SaraKay and I were singing in the choir for the afternoon session and I was helping host the dinner between sessions. Daddy's solo in the closing choir number was beautiful and the conference talks were inspiring.

President Shipley told of his trip to the Holy Land and of the impressions and experiences he had while "walking where Jesus walked". After such a harried morning, it felt good to sit and ponder on the Atonement before the Easter weekend came to an end.

Earlier in the week Tim sent us a copy of his two essays for applications for admittance to the Accounting program and the Marriott Business school. I gave the copy to Chet and David and they both made corrections and suggestions. Sunday night Tim and I spent a couple hours going over the essays and making the changes that were suggested. He really appreciated their efforts and before he left for Rexburg about ten, he had them finished up and ready to submit. Daddy gave him a beautiful blessing before he left for school. He has an intense week ahead with five finals and his departure on Thursday. The test he is most concerned about is his Accounting since he has to maintain his GPA in Accounting to qualify to be admitted into the BYU Provo program.

[Dad] Last week when Sue called John and they were getting ready to leave for the temple—we were also. We had a chapel session scheduled for our stake that night and thoroughly enjoyed

President and Sister Loveland. We went through the previous session so we could get home earlier for SaraKay. It is always a joy to be in the temple--and especially with dear friends or family.

Thursday morning the three District Directors--Dave Kirk, Brian Porter and I met to set up the agenda for Monday's staff meeting. I wrote it up and sent it out to everyone and then I conducted the meeting on Monday. Everything went pretty much as we planned until Kim took over and spent almost an hour on reinforcing what we had gone over on membership before he joined the meeting.

We had a successful first half of the Merit Badge Pow Wow with about 280 boys there. Bradford Harper was in charge and had done a great job with recruiting counselors, notifying boys of the merit badges they were registered for and the prerequisites to do before getting there Saturday, and also notifying all the Scoutmasters which classes their boys were in. I had checked out the key for the High School so I was opening the school early and then opening rooms and getting equipment for the Recognition Night and then closing and locking everything up afterwards. It ended up being a full day even without the stake conference responsibilities. I only regret that I didn't get to spend more time with Dave and Andrea and family while they were here.

The Jamboral is in two weeks and we are working hard on getting ready for it and Spring recruiting and trying to get new units organized also to make up for the one's we lost during rechartering. I have been calling Dad just about every day and really enjoy the deepening of our relationship as a result. I just wish he was closer so that we could be more supportive as a family.

One other thing we had to work into the weekend and Monday was finishing off Sara Kay's pinewood derby for the races on Tuesday night. We finally got the wheels on just as we were going out the door. It turned out really well and she ended up being the second fastest car there and was pleased with the results of her designing and painting. I was really proud of the initiative she took with it and how much she was able to do.

April 29, 2003

[Mom] I just got off the phone with Grandpa Larsen. He sounded good and mentioned that he was ready for church which is held at 11 each Sunday. Alva Lu's brother-in-law, Marvin, is the mini Bishop for the care center and it is nice for

Grandpa to have that touch of home. Stephani, Linds, and family spent some time with him last Sunday while they were visiting Linds' folks in St. George over the Easter weekend. They said that the facility where he is staying is very nice and that Grandpa looked so handsome and smart in his Sunday best. Alva Lu continues to improve although her progress is slow, a common thing with this particular surgery. I know that it is hard for Grandpa to be out of his own home, but he is doing the best he can with the situation. He has a phone in his room now and would appreciate a call from any of you.

We have had a cold and rainy week this past week, a wonderful boost to the dry fields and yards in the area. We are supposed to get more rain this next week but Daddy and the other scouters are praying that it will clear up for the Jamboral that is being held this weekend at the fairgrounds. Such dignitaries as Mel Hammond and Mike Simpson are coming as special guests. A tremendous amount of work has gone into the planning of this event and hopes are high for its success. As usual, Daddy is in the middle of all the hustle and bustle, doing his part to make it happen!

Steph and Linds have been working to get their yard graded and ready to begin installing their sprinkling system before doing anything with grass and garden.

Shaunte! and Randy will close on their home the first of May and will join the ranks of "renters" for the two months before moving to St. Louis the end of June. They are so grateful to have their home sold and to leave Iowa with no loose ends. Randy said on chat that their time in St. Louis could be either for one or two years. (He wouldn't commit to moving back to Blackfoot after that, though)

Jonie is going to college, hoping to upgrade her employment once she completes her degree. Jeff is working for the Department of Natural Resources and the kids are anxious for summer vacation. This fall Alex will be going to kindergarten, and Sid and Corey will be in seventh and sixth grade respectively. Nora, Jonie's older sister, is caring for her husband who is terminally ill with cancer and that has been a sad chapter in their lives these last few months. Our prayers are with them.

Steve said that they have been busy sprucing up their yard and have even planted some peas in their garden. They are gearing up for the grasshopper infestation that is predicted in Cache

Valley by planting resistant crops (tomatoes and strawberries) in the garden and the juicier ones (potatoes, beans, corn) up close to the house. Maybe he and Bonnie ought to offer the children money for mashed grasshoppers. It worked for us. I asked him if the children were helping him with the gardening and he said that Jared had helped him plant the peas the other day but grew tired of it after a short while. I agreed that planting peas was a bit tricky for a pre-schooler. He commented that my choice of words was interesting since when Jared quit planting, he said, "Daddy, planting these is "a wittle twicky".

David is going to play Mr. Mom for three days this weekend while Andrea goes to Women's Week with her mother and sister. I'm proud of my sons and sons-in-law for having the ability to cope when they're left in charge of house and home.

Becky and Chet spent the weekend in Utah where Becky attended a convention for home-schoolers and presented a class on Mozart Math. She was able to secure some sales as well as spend some fun time with the Seely's.

John is interviewing today for a new position with Ford. The last two years have convinced him that his interest and focus is in the MBA field and he is pulling out of the two-year rotation early to secure a spot utilizing his training. The position he is hoping for has to do with sales and product in the Asia-Pacific area of the company. He and Laurel have appreciated the response to their family history project and want to remind you to get your orders in if you are interested.

Mike had company for the weekend. Clayton Firth, Andrea (the cute one at the reunion last summer), and a roommate stayed with him en route to Nauvoo. They joined us on chat last night for a while. Mike has had some second thoughts about Angela since breaking it off, so we'll see what develops in the next few weeks.

Paul and Jenny have included pictures in their weekly newsletter about their garden. The university rents these plots to 1300 students for use each spring/summer and they have already got things planted. They have another two weeks of school and then summer break, which proves to be enjoyable in wonderful Wisconsin.

Tim arrived in the wee hours of the morning on Saturday in Houston after a 30+ hour drive. Fortunately, he and the other two fellows he caravanned with didn't have any car problems along the way. The apartment where they will live

is modern and clean and Tim is impressed with his supervisor and the prospects for a profitable summer. They found their ward yesterday but it was stake conference and so they didn't really get acquainted. Houston is a city of 5,000,000 residents (fourth largest in the U.S.) and hopefully chocked full of people badly needing pest control! He works dawn to dusk so call late night if you need to reach him. I forgot to ask which time zone but I'm assuming he is one hour ahead of us. By the way, several of you asked regarding his Accounting test. He got a 99%, exactly what he needed to get his A in the class! He was pretty pumped about it!

SaraKay and I are still looking for some joint work venture that we can do for the summer months to bring in some money. She has reached that point where she needs to help out with her financial needs and doesn't have a harvest check to keep her afloat. She has some possibilities and we're doing some calling and some praying about it. She is excited about a sewing class she has been invited to attend which is being taught by a friend's mother for a week this summer. It will be for four hours a day and they will sew several projects, have a picnic, and learn basic sewing skills.

I'm counting down the days until the school year is over. Saturday despite the rain, sleet, hail, and snow, we bundled up and got some yard work done. I worked in my flower garden where I was somewhat sheltered from the biting north wind that blew for most of the day. Our neighbors, the Hanni's, were also out doing yard work despite the blustery, cold weather. I noticed that their son, Derek was mowing the lawn wearing a ski cap, several layers of coats, and insulated boots! I guess you do what you have to, to stay warm! We did get the lawn mowed and some pots set out and even planted some petunias and pansies. Tonight for home evening we are going to try to get in the peas and onions. We are going to down-size the garden this year and only use part of our area.

[Dad] Since Mom finished writing we received a letter from BYU for Tim awarding him a full tuition scholarship for next year. When we called to tell him about it, he was excited to have some good news; he had just finished seven hours of selling without a sale so it was good to find out that he had earned \$3,000+ dollars that day anyhow. Also, Sara Kay is following in earlier sibling's footsteps as she will soon start mowing at the cemetery. It was a timely phone call yesterday to

Jolene Farmer just as she was lining up her crew for the summer. Also, I received a call from President VanOrden and he was supposed to set a missionary apart but had to leave town and wondered if I would do it. It was Kendall Adams who had returned early last year about Tiger Ear time after one and a half weeks in the mission field. It was a special spiritual experience as I prayerfully prepared and felt the inspiration of the Lord in the things I said to him in his blessing.

Sunday was an interesting and full day. We had a chapel full of Harpers as Allen reported his mission to Russia and Taylor spoke as he prepares to leave. Brian and Nikki were the only ones not there and it was sweet to see them all gather in support of Brent's family. I was the only one doing recommend interviews Sunday night and had two first timers-one of which was Janalee Thompson as she prepares to leave on her mission. We then had a bi-stake youth fireside at the West stake with a Sister Seamons from BYU-Idaho. She did a great job and was very entertaining and enjoyed by all.

Saturday was the last day of the Blackfoot District Merit Badge Pow Wow and it was a great success. Bradford Harper was in charge this year and really did a great job. The weather had been unsettled all morning with rain, snow, hail, etc., but it cleared up for a while in the afternoon and I bundled up and mowed the lawn, tilled the weeds around the edges of the garden, did the trimming and pruned another apple tree. I was sure missing the help we had last week from Dave and Andrea!

I had a couple of recruiting experiences at elementary schools last week. At one, SaraKay and Trisha wore costumes for Akela and TC (full costumes like a mascots) and they were a real hit. At the other one, the costumes were worn by three other volunteers because SaraKay went to Edwards Theatre with her literature class to see "Holes". This week is the Jamboral and most of the next couple of days will be spent getting ready for it. We are excited and encouraged with current signups of over 8,500 and more coming in each day.

PS. Gary called me yesterday and Ashlee has received her mission call to Brazil. I don't remember which mission-but we are all excited for her opportunity to serve.

May 7, 2003

[Mom] The Jamboral is officially over for another four years and everyone in charge is breathing a

great sigh of relief. Despite forecasts of torrential rains, Blackfoot had only scattered showers and all the extensive planning paid off. I think we all felt that our prayers were heard and honored, allowing the event to proceed. They figured over 9,000 scouts attended along with leaders and others helping man the booths and displays. When Becky called about two Saturday afternoon and mentioned all the rain that Idaho Falls had received, I felt doubly grateful for our good weather.

Thursday night Daddy had a meeting with the National Venturing Associate Director who flew in earlier that day. When he returned that night he informed me that while they were holding their meeting, someone had vandalized our van and broken out the back side window, probably with a large rock. Upon seeing the damage, he called the police and filed a report. They told him that there had been a rash of such incidents and that they still hadn't been able to catch the perpetrators. The van is presently at Blackfoot Paint and Glass being repaired. Thank goodness we have good insurance on it. Daddy said that it would cost nearly \$600 to be repaired!

We heard from Tim last night. He reports that he is doing well and even enjoying his work. The company is organized, efficient, and the people of Houston have been pleasant. He said that the area has an abundance of pests and that he even contacted one family that was having trouble with scorpions in their house. Although he wouldn't wish that on anyone, it made for a receptive customer. The group he works with are great guys and they have each been outfitted with cell phones and walkie talkies so that they can keep in touch with each other throughout the day. The singles ward is enormous so they haven't had much of an opportunity to get acquainted. He is moving ahead with his app to the accounting program and will find out about that in mid July.

As of Thursday, Shauntel said that they are still moving ahead with their sealing date of May 24th. They will know for sure by the end of this week if everything will be completed by the state agencies. If all goes according to plan, I will fly out to help them with their move the week of June 22. Becky and Chet will trade me babysitting time for some frequent flier miles and make it possible for me to make the trip. We were going to drive it as a family but the BSA wouldn't agree to the vacation days Daddy handed in since it is at such a busy time of year. I had decided to drive it myself when Becky suggested this other plan and I have felt

relieved and grateful that I will be able to fly and cut time and expense.

SaraKay got a job last week mowing at the cemetery. I made a phone call on Tuesday to Jolene Farmer who supervises the ground crews and she said that her daughter and a friend were looking for someone who could help them with the hand mowing for the summer months. She will work for 2-3 days every other week and get \$6/hour. She also has a lead on a weekly babysitting job that would bring in a little and not be too overwhelming. We have decided to "worm" the pasture this year if we can figure out how to do it. We had so many problems with cows getting out last year that we've about decided not to rent it out again until we find someone willing to fix fences.

[Dad] I'm sorry I am so slow in finishing off this week's letter and getting it sent out. This last two weeks we had to keep track of our hours and how much time was spent on program, fundraising, and management. I worked 122 hours—that is about three weeks' worth in two. A lot of that time was spent on the Jamboral and some of that time was actually spent in meetings with Elder Hammond or Brad Harris, the National Associate Director of Venturing-time that I would have spent as a volunteer if I wasn't a paid professional.

The Jamboral was a great success despite the weather. We were able to really increase the enthusiasm and commitment to attending Wood Badge this year through a raffle we held with a mountain bike, full tuition scholarship, and a couple of hand-made staves as prizes. Hopefully we can fill all four courses this year. The first course of the year is in June and that is the one I am on staff. It was a combination of that and membership efforts culminating in June that interfered with our plans to drive out and help Shaunnie and Randy.

I was able to get three new units in last week. One of the most exciting was the Spanish Branch Troop. Thanks largely to Gary's efforts, the branch has a significant number of young men coming out to mutual regularly and all the powers that be finally relented in letting them register as their own unit after finding out that generally, they weren't being registered in their home units. They were able to attend the Jamboral and had a wonderful time. We also had some positive experiences for our PATS crew at the Jamboral. They did service hours helping with dispensing tables and chairs to each venue according to their

needs and then gathering them up after the event. We have a district meeting this week and round table next week and membership inventories that I am working on.

May 12, 2003

[Mom] Yesterday just before our meetings, Randy Cox came up to me and said, "Are you having a nice Mother's Day? Are those kids of your taking good care of you?" I had to admit that I have been having Mother's Day for several weeks now starting with John's gift of Grandma Gooch's life history, the sweet essay by Becky, Steph, and Shaunnie, and then yesterday complete with gifts, dinner, and the family video. Thank you so much for all your thoughtful remembrances. It was very rewarding to have these Family History projects completed since they have been things that have been on my "To Do" list for a long time.

Speaking of family, Daddy received a call last night from Staff. He is in charge of the Allan Larsen family reunion this summer and he is planning it for the Phoenix area. It will be the weekend of July 11-13. When I checked my calendar, I realized that this is around the time that Skyler will be having his farewell and that maybe we could stay with them and be there for Skyler's talk. Lisa is checking on that part of it but has invited us to stay with them. Also, on the afternoon of July 19th, Kathy and Dick are hosting a cook-out for the Richards' side of the family. Lisa and Don and family will be there since Skyler will be entering the MTC the following Wednesday and Don and Deniece and their family plan to attend.

Another thing Staff mentioned when he called was that his son, Jimmy, has been deployed to Iraq and arrived there a few days ago. Jimmy called home once they arrived and although he cannot disclose his location, he did mention that it is very touching to have the small children come up and hug their legs and thank them for being there to help them.

Although the situation isn't as grave as it was the first weeks, still there is a lot of uncertainty and risk and I know that they would appreciate our faith and prayers in their behalf.

On chat last night Randy mentioned that the paper work for the sealing is still being processed so everyone is on hold until they receive the final word. I know that Becky and Chet are making the trip, with or without the sealing, so I guess the party is on, come what may. I visited with Mike

and he was excited to have some of the family coming and have a chance to get together.

Update on the romance scene: Mike had a date last week with a girl who served part of her mission in Shauntel and Randy's ward and returned to visit after completing her mission. They had a fun time and are e-mailing until summer when Mike will be in Utah and can get better acquainted. Tim: He put aside his full schedule and attended a wonderful young adult dance and met a cute Texan who is also a BYU coed, who he danced with twice. Her family just happens to live in the area where he is selling pest control so he may have an opportunity to drop in professionally this week and call on her! That spiced up his week a little!

[Dad] Thanks for all your attention to your mother for Mother's Day. SaraKay and I gave her a new pair of Gingher scissors and a large hymn book that she can write her fingerings in as she learns to play the hymns. It was a treat to be able to go to Becky and Chet's for dinner and to watch the family movie. What a nostalgic trip!!

Saturday we got a lot of work done in and around the house. SaraKay mowed the lawn, while I trimmed and mowed under the bushes. Then I did some pruning and trimming and spread fertilizer on the garden. That afternoon we went to Krupp Scout Hollow for a Wood Badge staff gathering to review recruiting and the logistics of the course. It was a fun evening because we left early and went to "The RM" in Idaho Falls. We laughed ourselves silly and SaraKay kept saying it was the best movie in the whole world.

Friday night was the High Priest banquet and we enjoyed hearing Noel Martin Tew sing, a couple stories by a Brother Shelman (who said to say hi to Dad), and a concluding number of "I'm Proud to be an American" by Ron Simmons. He and Noel have wonderful voices and it was fun to hear from them.

Thursday afternoon we picked up Will and Sherry Thomas and Dale and Sharon Taylor and went to the temple for an initiatory assignment. It was a real treat to reaffirm those marvelous blessings of the washing and anointing. Will and Sherry have been called as temple workers and are reveling in that assignment together. It was the first time Dale and Sharon had done initiatory since they were married. We ate out together in the temple before we came home for meetings that night.

May 20, 2003

[Mom] I have been on the phone finalizing plans for the upcoming Steve Larsen reunion. As of now we will gather on Sunday, July 27, for dinner and a musical program. We hope that each family will come with at least one number (vocal, dance, or instrumental.) Monday morning we will go to Heise Hot Springs, a drive from here of about an hour. Those staying in Idaho Falls will have a shorter distance. Heise has hot pools, medium hot pools, a large swim pool complete with water slide and diving boards and a grassy picnic area.

Monday following Heise, we will return to Becky and Chet's for a BBQ. Unless we're all dog tired, we may be able to play a little volleyball, too.

Tuesday morning we have scheduled a float trip with Randy Cox for the adults. Becky and Bonnie will arrange babysitting for their kids, and I will arrange for sitters for the children that stay here with us.

We will probably leave about 8 a.m. for Alpine and float the rapids twice. Randy will have his trailer for the boats and equipment and we will take the rest in our van if the Idaho Falls bunch can travel together. We will firm up the plans as we get closer to it.

We've been trying to get on top of the yard and garden and on Saturday, despite the cold and wind, SaraKay and I planted a lot of garden and even put out bedding plants under hot caps. On Sunday and Monday nights we had a bad frost and all the plants were leveled! Sad. I should have known better than to put out bedding plants before June. Anyway. I'm going to wait and see if the two-inch stumps that are left will revive. I've seen it happen before although they are set back a ways. Don't we just love Idaho weather!

In closing I wanted to write about SaraKay and this stage she is in. As all the rest of you began to mature, it was always interesting to see how one day you could look and sound so mature and the next day I couldn't believe how childish you were. It seemed so strange that you could go from one extreme to another, sometimes in an amazingly short span of time. Well, as the years have passed, it has been my observation that nothing natural changes from one stage to another instantly. Think of the changing of the seasons, of the growth of plants, animals and other things. I've decided that kids are the same way. Case in point: On Sunday SaraKay got ready for church. She came out of her room looking so grown up in

her black denim skirt, white heeled sandals, blue shirt and appropriate accessories. As the time passed, she got her hair fixed and her makeup put on without as much as a single call for help from me. "Well, I thought, things are looking up!"

Later that day as we were finishing up dishes after dinner, I was standing at the sink and she came from the dining area into the kitchen. All at once I heard this crash. She made a flying leap and landed on the kitchen floor. She had been taking off her CTR ring and not watching where she was going, stumbled on her high heeled shoes, and had tossed her ring high in the air. After picking herself up, she started to laugh as I turned around wondering what in the world was going on. Without skipping a beat, she began crawling around on the floor looking for the missing ring and laughing so hard that she could hardly function. Of course, crawling around on the floor in a denim skirt, nylons, and Sunday shoes certainly isn't the ideal, but she persisted until she found the ring which had somehow wedged itself under the rug by the sink. When she found it, she grabbed it and then laid out on the floor full length and laughed some more. (Oh, if Zack could see her now!) What could I do but laugh along with her? Sometimes she truly amazes herself at how clumsy and nuts she is! Well, anyway, I'm glad she can laugh about it because, sure as shootin', tomorrow she'll be in the dumps and convinced that her life is a shambles, despite many evidences to the contrary! Times like this remind me of something Marge Merrill told me about being pregnant at 45. She said, "It isn't having a newborn at 45 that will kill you. It is going through menopause with a teenager in the house. That's a challenge!"

[Dad] It is that time again. The pressure is on for May and June to produce as many boys as possible. We have a shrinking available youth population, but ever-increasing expectations on numbers of boys registered in Scouting. I have a hard time sharing this calling responsibility because of the fact that membership is what Kim says we were hired for. There was an Executive Board meeting last week and I saw a copy of the agenda and handouts the next morning. Of the five new units organized this year (that weren't ward splits) I had organized four of them. Of the fifteen new James E. West Fellows this year, all but two were ones that I had started and had just completed their pledges. In my own mind, at least, I feel I am making a significant contribution to

health and progress of the Scouting movement in Eastern Idaho.

For FHE I reviewed notes from Dr. Gary & Kara Haddock's talks at the Stake Fireside we had Sunday night to commemorate the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. They gave great talks about missionary work and their experiences as Mission President in South Africa. Prior to the fireside we had a stake recognition for those girls that had completed their Young Womanhood Recognition Award. It was great to see the lovely young women in our stake who had been working hard and achieving their goals. It is hard to believe that SaraKay has been so aggressive with her Personal Progress that she is halfway there already and just about everyone recognized Sunday night was a graduating Senior.

Last week I went over to Jackson to meet with Dave Palmer for an interim review. I took Lynn Gunter, who is the new Endowment Director, to introduce him to some people there. One of the visits we made was to a family member of one of the more significant estates in Jackson whom I have been cultivating over the years. He said that because of some heart problems with the father of the family, they were finally really getting serious about getting their planning in order and within the next six months they would welcome the help of someone like Perry Cochell, the regional endowment counsel.

There is great potential for the Council with the planning that family needs with all their holdings in Jackson. The value of real estate over there is incredible. The council owns a small home that would be worth \$60-80,000 here—in Jackson it is worth about \$350,000!

Let me share with you a thought that I used in a recent YW leadership meeting about unity and teamwork: *"Nobody is a whole team... We need each other. You need someone and someone needs you. Isolated islands we're not. To make this thing called life work, we gotta lean and support. And relate and respond. And give and take. And confess and forgive. And reach out and embrace and rely... Since none of us is a whole, independent, self-sufficient, super-capable, all-powerful hotshot, let's quit acting like we are. Life's lonely enough without our playing that silly role. The game is over. Let's link up."*

May 28, 2003

[Mom] We've had beautiful summer weather these past few days and this morning it is sunny

and warm. We had Stephani and the kids here over the weekend and thoroughly enjoyed being together. They left yesterday morning about 11 for Logan. Linds has been installing a sprinkler system in their yard over the weekend and they were going to spend the rest of yesterday helping him and planting a garden. Steph said that the yard work has been really overwhelming but that when she gets discouraged, she just reminds herself that she doesn't have to move this summer and that thought is such a sweet one that the discouragement doesn't last long.

It was nice to have Steph and family along when we went to visit the cemetery Sunday afternoon. After we decorated Grandma Larsen's grave, we walked through the cemetery, visiting with people, taking note of headstones and enjoying the beautiful floral arrangements. It doesn't take long to realize that a lot of people have suffered a lot of sorrow with the loss of loved ones. It is always touching to see the headstones for the babies and children. SaraKay was our guide as we searched for the burial site for Joe Gooch, my step-grandfather. She had noticed it when she mowed last week and wondered if he was Grandma Gooch's husband.

At the time we visited there were only two floral arrangements but by Monday there were several more that had been brought by family and Grandma's grave looked lovely. It's nice to take a minute to pay homage to lost loved ones. Daddy played the trumpet at a memorial service in Blackfoot yesterday morning honoring war veterans and he said that it was a sweet program. He had several people compliment him on his playing.

I am home this morning caring for Larsen. He has been such a sweet little fellow to have around, although he has had some anxious moments, missing his family. It was so helpful to have Steph and her family here, too. Katie, Sam, and Josh are such good help with him and he really warmed up to them from the moment they arrived. Becky and Chet will be home tonight from their trip to Minneapolis. I suspect Becky will fill you in on that in her weekly letter. I will be returning to school tomorrow and complete the year on June 5th. SaraKay has her last day this Friday and most of this week will be spent going to Lagoon and Downata.

Mike signed up to be a part of a control group for a study on gambling. A woman from the University of Iowa is conducting the study. Mike was

interviewed over the phone for 30 minutes and they filled out a questionnaire that took about 40 minutes. He will be paid \$25 for participating in this study. As a part of it, he gave her all of your names and she will be calling you these next few weeks to conduct the study over the phone. If you are willing to participate, she will interview you and send you the written questionnaire. Upon receiving it back she will pay you \$25.

Mike said that if you don't want the bother, just tell her up front. He has done several of these studies to earn money on the side and he said that it is usually not that hard so he thought maybe you might be willing. The person conducting the study needed families and that is why Mike gave her your names. He called to warn me that she would be calling since he knows that I usually hang up on telemarketers and he didn't want me to do that to this lady. Expect a call. She will work with you to find a time when it is convenient for you.

[Dad] Where does the week go—it seems to melt away. But life is so full and rewarding for us at this stage of our lives. Sue mentioned having Larsen here for a few days while Becky and Chet and their other two were in the Midwest. Monday they ran in a 10K run in Indianapolis and they were able to spend time with Shaunnie and Randy, Mike, Jennie, and Paul in Iowa City last weekend. We sure loved Larsen—he is such an adorable little guy and of course—he really likes his Grandpa!!

Monday was kind of a do-nothing day other than the memorial service at the Grove City cemetery. I played, "To the Colors" as the flag was raised and then after the program and gun salute I played "Taps". It always adds so much to an outdoor flag ceremony to have a bugler and I gain quite a bit of satisfaction in being able to do that and do it quite well (even if I do say so myself).

As I have been riding my bike I have been reviewing and memorizing. It has seemed good to be able to use that time constructively and hopefully add some useful poems and scriptures to my repertoire. Last week I polished off Rudyard Kipling's, "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" and a story poem called, "Desert Pete". When I was talking to Dad and mentioned Kipling, he ripped off the first six lines of "When Earth's..." and started in on "Gunga Din". Then he whipped out, "One Fat Hen" and I was amazed at how he was so sharp and able to remember things like that so well.

This Saturday we have the culmination of our stake Humanitarian project for the youth. We planned on having Gary and Jean Korth speak to them at a fireside that morning because they were returning this week from a Humanitarian mission to Indonesia and India. This weekend we found out that just before they were to leave, he became very sick and had to be hospitalized. They were in Bali and weren't even able to return to Jakarta to pack up and leave for home. He is being medically evacuated to Singapore and hopefully get medical attention on a higher level. Luckily, Steph mentioned a couple she had heard from in their ward who had been on a Humanitarian mission to Berma who might be able to fill in for the fireside with our youth. With Steph's help we have made the connections and are looking forward to having the Merrill's come up from Logan and speak to our youth.

June 6, 2003

[Mom] Well, summer has begun and SaraKay is busy keeping up with her two part-time jobs. Yesterday she got paid for mowing at the cemetery and that gave her new enthusiasm for staying with the regimen. The free enterprise system is truly inspired! I'm still in school until Thursday and it has been a little tricky trying to handle our different schedules, but hopefully it won't be so hard once I am home full-time. Daddy is in the throes of preparing for Wood Badge next week. The June course is for two 3-day weekends so he will be gone Wednesday-Saturday next week and then the week I fly out to Iowa. Becky has offered to help us with Sara Kay and that will put my mind at ease regarding the days that Dad and I will both be involved elsewhere.

This past weekend we hosted Luanna and Derwin Merrill from the Logan area. They replaced the Korth's as speakers at the stake youth conference fireside since Korth's are still in India, trying to get home from their mission, but delayed because of Brother Korth's unexpected illness. The doctors in Singapore have diagnosed him with encephalitis and are treating him for it with the hope that he will be well enough to travel soon. It has been an ordeal for he and his wife, Jean, to be so far from home and dealing with a life-threatening situation.

The Merrill's were wonderful. They are such a delightful and energetic couple and we fell in love with them the minute they arrived. We spent Friday night visiting with them until almost 11 before we retired for bed. As we concluded our visit, they commented that they appreciated the

opportunity to really share their mission experiences with us. They said that most people ask them about their mission but don't really care to know and take the time to listen.

Of course, my connection with Pakistan through my folks was a wonderful surprise to them. They spent their first mission in Karachi, Pakistan (leadership mission among the Christians of that area) and their second mission in Burma (humanitarian). They had some amazing opportunities and have learned just this past month, that as a result of the Church's volunteer efforts in that country, the Church has now received permission to send in full-time missionaries on the condition that they will teach English 15 hours a week to the citizens of Burma. They have been so excited to receive that news and are contemplating another mission.

It wasn't until they left that we learned that they are the grandparents of the girl in Steph's ward that she is lining Mike up with. He is going to meet her when he comes for summer break the middle of July. He is also going to take time to resolve his feelings for his friend Becky from California. She will be in Provo for the summer and it will give him a little time to work things out there.

Tim called last weekend, happy to have met his goal for May, but a little down about the daily grind of door-to-door selling. He said it is so easy to become discouraged with the constant rejection. The high point of his week is the singles ward that he attends each Sunday. They have a wonderful, large group, and everyone is eager to participate and get acquainted. He said the testimony meeting last Sunday was absolutely amazing. He was impressed with the depth of spirituality and the testimonies borne.

The final speaker was a young man who was wheeled to the front of the chapel by his sister. He was very bright and sharp and proceeded to relate his story of the past three years. It was just three years ago that he was in an accident and became a quadriplegic. He said that for a long time after the accident he was very bitter about it and the loss of all his dreams for a fulfilling life. He recounted his coming back from this time of discouragement and his appreciation for the gospel. Tim said it was so inspiring and thought-provoking.

We visited on Saturday with Rick and Terry. We went to deliver a graduation gift to Amanda who will be graduating this Thursday but she wasn't there. We did have a chance for a quick visit with

Rick and Terry and they mentioned that Jacob has been struggling with a hernia but is on a waiting list for surgery. That's socialized medicine for you! Anyway, they hope that he can hold out until his time for surgery arrives. In the meantime, it has given them all cause for concern. Other than that, he is doing fine and having a wonderful experience.

Deniece called and informed us that Kaetie is getting married on June 26th to a young man from Sugar City. There are a few days break between spring and summer terms and they are going to take advantage of the time to tie the knot. Deniece called this morning to make the appointment at the temple. She is in high gear trying to pull things together in just three weeks, but she has done it recently enough that she has a lot of things she can draw from and ideas to use at the reception.

This Friday I am leaving to go to Salt Lake to help Grandma Ilene after her surgery. I will be staying until Monday, at which time Deniece will take over for a few days. It's nice to have several of us close enough around to help out when Mom needs us. Hopefully this won't set her back too far. She has been feeling so good since her recent bout with shingles and life has been much more pleasant for her these past few weeks.

[Dad] Life has certainly been hectic around here as usual. Wednesday night, Troy Goodwin called and asked if we would speak in Church this Sunday on Modesty and Morality. He was disappointed that Sue was going to be gone but I guess I will go ahead. I suggested he also ask Jan Wray of the Stake YW Presidency who is in our ward to be my speaking companion.

I have really been motivated since I have been able to get back outside on my bike and I have been riding about 10 miles a day. It is a peaceful time of being alone and has been a wonderful time for memorizing.

June 10, 2003

[Mom] Daddy is leaving tomorrow morning for Wood Badge for the rest of the week. This week and four days next week he will be at camp as staff advisor to a weekend Wood Badge course. He has presentations and lots of responsibilities so he is frantically getting things ready.

He and SaraKay did fine while I was in Utah with Grandma except for on Sunday when SaraKay got a terrible case of the flu. Fortunately, she was feeling better yesterday and able to go to her

sewing camp and babysitting. She is gone to camp again this morning and I am sticking close to home since I'm due to get the irrigation water any minute now and I have to be here to make sure all goes well.

Daddy has been faithful about keeping the yard and garden watered and we've got a pretty good garden coming although I must admit we can't compete with all the variety in Paul and Jenny's. As far as the bugs are concerned, I would ask the adjoining tenants what they would recommend. We used to "sic" the kids on the potato bugs and offer a penny reward for each one they destroyed, but Beth is a little young for that and I doubt that you have the time for it. You might also call the county extension agent and ask. They are usually wonderful sources of information.

My trip to Salt Lake was enjoyable. Grandma had a hernia operation of Thursday and Kathy had been with her until I arrived. Grandma was up and about and trying to take it easy and heal. I helped with meals, beds, did dishes, and spent some wonderful time visiting with her. I couldn't help thinking about all the strength I have drawn from her over the years as she has counseled me on everything from marriage and child-rearing to cooking and gospel living. She has always been a source of good counsel. I'm grateful that she has a lovely, secure home and the things she needs at this time of her life.

On Saturday we took a while to rearrange some of her family history binders. She had purchased some 2-inch binders for all her genealogy sheets since the 3-inch ones that she was using were too heavy for her to lift. I was helping by transferring pages and writing on the front of the binders. I went into her computer room to get some magic markers and a ruler and was looking through the drawers on Grandpa Arch's desk. A wave of nostalgia hit me as I saw some of the things that he used when he would write his talks or do other paper work. I'm sure Grandma has that happen to her daily although now she is grateful that he is not struggling anymore.

For those of you who may be going to call for Father's Day, let me mention that Daddy will be home late Saturday night. His Sunday meeting schedule includes a 7 a.m. meeting, usually getting home by 9 until choir at 10:30, meetings from 11:00 to 2:00. He starts in again at about 5:30 so if any of you want to call for Father's Day, that schedule should be a help to you.

June 17, 2003

[Mom] It's a beautiful summer day today. Sara Kay didn't have to babysit and so she and her friends spent the afternoon floating the canal and watching a movie. The sewing camp she attended last week was very informative and she had a ball making the items. The girls each made a swimsuit cover-up, tote bag, scarf, and pajamas. On Saturday all the mothers were invited to attend a fashion show and luncheon where the participants modeled their stuff. It was such a fun and positive experience for all of them and it was nice for us moms to be included in the festivities on Saturday.

Although she enjoyed the camp, it was very time consuming and most days she came home and went directly to babysit until six. This morning she got up and realized that she didn't have work or the camp and before long she and her friends were making plans. It's nice to have some of her friends living close enough that they can get together without me having to transport her to and from.

Daddy appreciated the cards and gifts from everyone. The minute he opened the DVD player he started reading the instructions but we had to leave for choir practice before he got it hooked up. Last night after Becky and Chet and family left, Daddy and SaraKay went downstairs to work on it but soon came back up saying that our TV didn't have a place for a DVD player to plug in. SaraKay was heartbroken, since she had already asked to borrow "Jonah and the Whale" (Veggie Tales) from the Wray's and wanted us to watch it for home evening tonight. She was in on the secret and has been so excited about having a DVD player. Knowing Daddy, he will figure something out. Thank you to all of you for your efforts to make the day so special.

We enjoyed having Becky and Chet here for dinner yesterday. After eating, we went out and sat in the shade of the windbreak and had a wonderful time visiting. Chet left this morning so Becky has several days alone this week but she has lots of things planned and has invited SaraKay to stay there with them after I fly out on Friday. Daddy will be at Wood Badge again until Saturday afternoon so he will pick her up on his way back home. I really appreciate Becky helping me out with all the details of the flight. She brought me e-ticket and went over it with me and all the things that I could expect on my trip. I must admit that I am nervous

about traveling on my own but I know I've got to "buck up" and just do it.

(Tues) SaraKay has to mow at the cemetery this morning so I'm going to be leaving to deliver her. Our prayers are with each of you. I know that you each have your trials and challenges. May the Lord direct you that you will be able to find answers and have the strength to perform all that is required. Be prayerful. I know from personal experience that the Lord will make our burdens light if we turn to him for help.

[Dad] First of all—thank you so much for the DVD player—it is wonderful!! SaraKay and I were able to get it hooked up last night to the new TV I bought at Sam's Club yesterday. We started watching a "Star Wars—Attack of the Clones" DVD that she borrowed from Ellis's. The color and definition of the picture is so clear and realistic. The TV is just a little bigger than our last one (which we moved upstairs to the hutch in the corner of the dining room). I also appreciated the cards and sweet sentiments from each of you. I feel rather puffed up after all the fine things that were said—I know I don't deserve all the accolades.

Our garden is looking quite good this year. We have had some problems to overcome because of late frosts and not getting enough water on soon enough. For FHE we tilled and weeded and got the water going again and then went inside to hook up new TV and DVD player. SaraKay was great help and I appreciate her willingness. She and Mom mowed all the lawn and kept things green while I was gone to Wood Badge last week.

Sunday was a great Father's Day. We had the usual presidency meeting, then we met with the Activities Committee, and then with our Physical Facilities Representative. I came home and waited for SaraKay to come home from her Bishop's Youth Committee Meeting so I could open my presents and cards. Then we dashed off to choir practice, Church, and then an interview after Church. We were joined by Becky, Chet and family for dinner and enjoyed the rest of the evening with chat included.

Last week was a Wood Badge week. I was pretty involved even though we didn't have enough participants to staff the patrol that I was going to be Troop Guide for. I was grateful for the time I have spent memorizing while biking the last few weeks. I was able to recite "Desert Pete" for the opening campfire, "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" for the Scout's Own (religious service), and "Good Timber" for the staff campfire when

certificates and beads were presented to the staff. I also did a bit of bugling and played in a trumpet duet to accompany "How Great Thou Art" at the Scout's Own.

Let me just say in closing how much I appreciate each of you and your love and support. I am particularly pleased when I hear of the support and good things you do for each other and see evidence of your continuing communications with each other. Love, DAD

July 1, 2003

[Mom] It's been a memorable week for me. Prior to leaving for Iowa, I was pretty apprehensive about making the trip without Daddy at my side. Before I left, several of you called and gave me tips on how to survive air travel. I kept thinking of the lyrics to an old song, "He may ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston, he's the man who never returned." I hoped that I wouldn't somehow miss a connection and be out there, perpetually changing planes and never quite making it home. Before leaving I highlighted all the pertinent information and carried the e-ticket and my ID in a designated pocket of my purse so that I could have it handy at all times. Daddy was able to break away from his Wood Badge course long enough to see me off at the airport. And I was on my way.

I was grateful that I passed through security check without having to empty my suitcase although when I boarded in Cedar Rapids on the return flight, my carryon was searched and a pair of tweezers in my makeup pouch was discovered that I hadn't realized I had brought. They didn't confiscate them though so I figured that I had "innocuous" written all over my face. Anyway, it was a relief to get through security and on the plane.

The flight was uneventful except at Cincinnati where I had to take a shuttle to another area of the airport. I was grateful for a man sitting by me on the flight who checked my ticket and showed me to the shuttle. I travel so seldom that a lot of things don't make sense to me that a seasoned traveler takes for granted. Everyone I sat by both coming and going was very sweet. I also took a couple books that helped to pass the time, especially on the three- and one-half hour flight from SL to Cincinnati.

On the return flight from Salt Lake I sat by a beautiful black woman who was originally from Ghana. She was going to Rexburg to help with a

new grandbaby. We had a wonderful time visiting about our families. She has a son who still lives in Ghana who is trying to immigrate with his wife and baby, two daughters at BYU-I and a son waiting for a mission call.

She has a 17-year-old still at home. They run an appliance sales and service store in Modesto, CA and have lived in the US for 25 years. Her husband came to the US and joined the Church while he was here, returned, converted his family, and they all immigrated and have been active in the church ever since. Her mother still lives in Ghana but is a member and is excited for the coming temple. It was so sweet to feel the depth of this woman's testimony and the success of her family.

Mike picked me up at the airport at 9:30 and we drove to Nauvoo. He said that it seemed a little strange to have the tables turned since I had always been the one getting him at airports. He had prepared a lunch that I ate enroute to Nauvoo and we had some wonderful time visiting together. When we arrived at the hotel, Paul and Jenny and Shauntel and Randy were still awake but we all agreed that we needed to get to bed and have a good night's rest for the big day.

The appointment for the sealing was at 11:00 Saturday morning. Paul, Jenny, and Mike went to a six o'clock session and were home shortly after eight. We had a quick breakfast, packed up, and left about 10 for the temple. We all had our cameras and tried to take a lot of pictures. Jenny and I went into the nursery and helped with Camille and Arch. Although Camille has already been sealed, the temple personnel went out of their way to make her feel a part of it. She and Arch were both dressed in white and during the ordinance, Camille stood by her mother at the altar and Arch was on the altar between Shaunnie and Randy. Keith and Maggie came from Madison and several friends from the ward were also there. As you can imagine, it was a poignant and teary occasion, sweet beyond words to express. I think it was made even more so by the fact that they were bringing to a close the Iowa/Nauvoo chapter of their lives and experiencing all the emotions that come with looking back and realizing that a new era was about to begin.

Following the sealing, the children were permitted to wear the white clothing outside for pictures. It was a beautiful summer day and the temple made a picturesque backdrop for their photos.

We enjoyed a picnic at the Nauvoo park just down the hill from the temple. I was touched with all the work Shauntel had done to make the day memorable for all of us. She had prepared two delicious salads, hogi's, drinks, and a dessert and had carefully planned out the meals for that evening and Sunday, accounting for all of us as well as the group that were coming for Arch's blessing. It was interesting for me to be a part of this Midwestern branch of the family who have kept in touch with each other and been an aid and support when other family was so far away. Jenny and Paul brought treats and breakfast foods to help out and paid for the motel rooms in Nauvoo and Keith and Maggie brought two vehicles including a pickup so that they could transport the things back to Madison for Paul and Jenny. It was obvious to me that they have developed a sweet relationship over the years and mutually work together for the benefit of all.

Keith and Maggie did some touring in Nauvoo before joining us at Andersons later that afternoon and they invited Camille to join them since she and their oldest, Dane, are pretty good buddies. Mike and Paul attended the Priesthood satellite broadcast at the Nauvoo chapel but the rest of us headed back to Iowa City and got some supper ready for the group before some of them went to "The Hulk" movie.

On Sunday we attended church with Shauntel and Randy. It was heart-warming to have people express their love and appreciation for them. That afternoon they blessed Arch at their home and had invited several couples and their families to join them for the occasion. Paul and Jenny left for home about four that afternoon and Keith and Maggie left a few hours later. It was a certainly a fun day and fitting climax to their time in Iowa.

Sunday night after things settled down, Shauntel and I sat up visiting and going over our plan of action for packing up the house the next few days. Shauntel had done a lot of packing of the storage and family room downstairs already and had given some furniture items away to friends and neighbors. Keith and Maggie brought a pick-up and loaded the washer and dryer for Paul and Jenny to take back to Madison. Keith and Randy also used the pick-up to get some moving supplies and boxes that someone in the ward offered them. These boxes proved to be a God-send. We had enough and to spare of every size and shape. Although I didn't express it to Shauntel, I honestly didn't see how we were going to accomplish the task before us in the time allotted. I knew it was a

monumental undertaking considering two full flights of stairs, a large garage, and all the cleaning of carpets and cupboards that are a part of the process. I pleaded with the Lord that night during my personal prayers that he would give us the stamina and ability to tackle the job and get the bulk of it done while I was there to help.

Monday morning Randy had some paper work and reports that he needed to complete and so Shaunnie and I focused our attention on the kitchen. We had thought that we would both be available to pack, but Arch was struggling with all the upheaval of the last few days and he didn't want much to do with me. So, between the two of us, we tried all sorts of schemes to keep him occupied and happy. At one point, Camille started playing with him and kept him happy and busy while we continued our packing. Later I commented to her that she was a wonderful babysitter. She looked at me with a doubtful expression and said, "Grandma, to be a babysitter you have to be 13. Then pulling herself up to her full height and waving her hand over her body, she informed me, "and this is only a 5!"

By early afternoon Randy was able to get his reports done and he decided to get the moving truck a day early and start loading. Although he had lined up some friends from the ward to come Tuesday evening to help load, the minute the U-Haul arrived, two sweet neighbors and Mike arrived and between the bunch of them they loaded all the heavy furniture and many of the boxes we had packed throughout the day. We were all very encouraged!

Tuesday went equally as well and by Tuesday evening when the friends arrived, it didn't take much to complete the loading. By Tuesday Arch was more accustomed to me and so I was able to relieve Shauntel and Randy a little and leave them free to pack and organize. That evening I took Arch in the stroller and Camille led the way on her bike and we went for an excursion to a nearby park. Arch, although still leery of me, was okay with leaving his parents behind as long as Camille was in sight and so the three of us spent time swinging, playing in the sand, and enjoying the evening. On the way back home, we spotted a mother rabbit and two baby rabbits and stopped to watch them. Two blocks later, Camille announced, "I think we all need to take a break!" and so we were just getting ready to sit on someone's front yard for a few minutes when Shauntel and Randy pulled up in their car. They

had gotten concerned and wondered if we were delayed for some unexpected reason.

We were all tired from the busy day and planned to get to bed early but some neighbors dropped in to wish them well and it was nearly ten before things settled down and Arch made it to sleep. With all the commotion, one of the only ways that he could make it to sleep was for Shauntel or Randy to take the rocking chair out on the patio and let the sounds of the freeway sing him to sleep. That is what Randy ended up doing that night since we were inside still packing and carrying things. Mike arrived and Shauntel emptied the freezer and sent him home with several sacks full of food. After Randy put Arch down for the night, we all walked out to the car to say good-bye to Mike. I wasn't really thinking about it, until Shauntel made the comment, "This good-bye will be our hardest!" I realized how much it has meant these last two years for Shauntel and Mike to have each other when they needed a touch of family. As I headed back to the house, I turned around to see them in a teary embrace standing there by Mike's car in the dark. I was grateful for a few minutes alone to gain my composure before Mike left and Shaunnie and Randy came back inside.

Wednesday morning Randy was up early packing up the garage while Shauntel and I got the kids ready to spend the day with a friend. Shaunnie drove me to the airport at Cedar Rapids and we hoped that Arch would settle in and get some sleep on the drive. He finally dropped off just as we arrived at the airport. I hated to leave before they were all packed up but my flight ticket couldn't be changed so we said a quick, teary good-bye.

I must admit that I've had a heavy heart worrying about them the last few days. When Stephani called and I expressed my concerns, she mentioned that there was a forwarding phone number and so yesterday I tried to call them but to no avail. Then, last night on chat, Shaunte! came on and we were able to visit with her about how things had gone the last few days. Today I visited with her again and she said that although there are still boxes everywhere, she is encouraged and feels like they are going to enjoy the house, the neighborhood, and the ward. Today was Randy's first day of work and we're hoping that he will enjoy this opportunity and feel that it is a good fit for him. Our prayers continue with them at this time of adjustment.

I was thinking last night that in the last 12 months we have had Steph, Shauntel, Becky, Michael, Paul, and Tim all move to a new location. It makes me tired just thinking about it. I guess the time will come when everyone will be pretty much settled, but that time is definitely not just around the corner. I guess the thing to remember is that life does settle and resume its normal pace eventually.

When I arrived at Idaho Falls, Daddy and Sara Kay were there waiting. We drove to Becky and Chet's and Becky fed us a late supper as I reviewed the events of the last few days. The tears were still pretty near the surface and have been ever since. It's hard to feel like I'm needed in St. Louis and to feel helpless to ease the stress that I know Shauntel is under right now. I do appreciate everyone's efforts here at home to keep things clean and make my homecoming so easy. I also appreciate Becky and Chet's "miles" that enabled me to make the trip and lend a hand. It was a sweet thing for me to get reacquainted with Camille and Arch. They are such sweet children and a credit to the nurturing that they have received. It is a decided joy for Daddy and I to visit our children and see the wonderful homes they are providing for their own families.

P.S. I need to let everyone know that the next two weeks are going to be pretty hectic. Take note of where we will be and when in case you need to contact us. We will leave this Thursday about 6 p.m. for Logan to attend a Fourth of July celebration with Steph and family before going to Wellsville to spend the night with Steve and Bonnie. We will spend the Fourth with them and then leave about 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning to go to Springville where Andrea and David's Anna Sue is being baptized and confirmed at a family gathering. Following that event and dinner, we will head for home, arriving here about 6 p.m.

The following week we are leaving on the 9th to go to St. George where we will check Grandpa out of his care center and spend the night at his home in St. George. The next morning, we will continue on to Phoenix for the Larsen reunion. Grandpa will stay with Staff and Kathy and we have arranged to stay with Lisa and Don although we will be involved with the Larsen's both Friday and Saturday. On Sunday we will attend Skyler's ward where he is giving his talk before leaving on his mission. On Monday we will leave for home, bringing Grandpa with us and settling him in at the Willows Assisted Living Center on our return on Tuesday.

July 7, 2003

[Mom] I'm sitting here in the computer room with a gentle breeze blowing in through the window and the sounds of birds welcoming the morning. This is the best of Idaho and made even better by the fact that it is Sunday and an opportunity to rest from our labors and worship.

We had a rewarding trip to Utah over the weekend. We arrived at Steph and Linds's in time to get acquainted with their cute dog, Beowolf, and to tour the yard and garden before going to the fireworks display at Aggie Stadium with them. It was fun to be a part of the enormous crowd of people and sit in the stadium visiting until the fireworks display began. There was entertainment including performances by a children's choir, alumni band, and a country western group. The fireworks display was orchestrated to beautiful music including "God Bless America", "I'm Proud to be an American," "Shanandoah," and "The Stars and Stripes Forever". Needless to say, it was very stirring and brought an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this nation and those who have sacrificed to preserve it.

Following the display, we drove to Wellsville and spent the night with Steve and Bonnie. On the Fourth we went to a parade in Hyrum, had a cookout, and just relaxed and visited. Steve and Bonnie are in the process of finishing off their basement which will give them a game room, two additional bedrooms, a bath, and storage room. Their neighbor who is a contractor has been doing the work. It is certainly going to be an asset to their lovely home.

We also became acquainted with Teresa, their new pet turtle, who spends the days on the patio in a large box, soaking in the sun. Steve stretched out two enormous pieces of plastic down their back hill and the kids put the hoses on and enjoyed their own water slide that afternoon. The rest of us took the opportunity to nap, visit, and get things ready for the wiener roast in their back pasture. It was enjoyable to have time to relax and visit.

Saturday morning we left for Springville. We took Steve, Rachel, and Chrissy with us to attend Angela's baptism. Bonnie felt that everyone would fare better if the whole family didn't go and so it worked for us to ride there and back with Steve and kids. It gave us a chance to have a little more visiting time although on the trip to Springville we listened to the Harry Potter tapes that Steph and Linds loaned us for our Arizona trip this next week.

Enroute home Steve drove while Daddy took a short nap and it gave me a chance for some one-on-one with him. Our conversation turned to his travels while he worked for Assist and to some of the adventures he had while driving around in unfamiliar places, trying to find companies and then meet flight schedules. He said that he had some pretty close calls as far as getting lost and barely making his flights. He said that although he enjoyed his work at Assist, he didn't miss the travel. He also mentioned that Assist was now down to about six employees and that he feels so grateful that he was able to find employment.

He told me about an experience he had while he and Bonnie were in San Francisco for their 10th wedding anniversary. They had finished going to "Phantom" and Bonnie was sick to her stomach so Steve walked down the block a short distance from the hotel to pick up a snack. As he approached the convenience store, he saw that it had a barred window with a clerk who took your order and retrieved the items for you and then slid them out under the bars to you following payment. He realized that this set-up must mean that the area was a tough neighborhood and he became nervous when a group of people approached him. As he was paying, they surrounded him and wouldn't let him pass until he gave them some money. He said that he gave them each some and then hurried past them. They proceeded to follow him saying that they wanted more. He told them that he had given them enough and he turned around and started running for the hotel. Fortunately, he outran them and arrived safely at the hotel.

I tell you this story not as an example of the ideal way to avoid a mugging. In fact, from all I have read, Steve broke most of the rules of how to survive when accosted and outnumbered. I just mention this to say that I was absolutely amazed that he escaped unscathed. He so easily could have been beaten, knifed, or shot. I'm sure the Lord was watching over him.

Let me comment on the sweet experience we had with Andrea's family on Saturday. When we called Saturday morning to get directions on how to get to the building for the baptism, Laurel Cottam invited us to join her and the family at her home at 10:15 when she would open her mission call. It had arrived several days earlier but knowing that the family was gathering on Saturday, she postponed opening it until her company arrived. We were delighted to be a part of that special occasion and arrived at the designated time.

Andrea's brother, Mark and family, and her sister, Lisa and family were all there and Laurel had Heather in No. Carolina on the phone while she read her call. Imagine how surprised we all were when she read "El Salvador, San Salvador East!" I think that is where Paul served. She will be in the mission office and proselyte in the evenings. It was so exciting for the family and there were lots of hugs and tears, as you can imagine.

We attended the baptism at 11:00 in Laurel's ward. Dave and Andrea had printed up some lovely programs and Angela looked so angelic in her white dress with her hair braided with white silk roses entwined. Both Laurel and I had assignments to bear our testimonies on the program and that opportunity was made all the more poignant by the events of the morning. Dave baptized and confirmed Angela and all the cousins were able to sit up by the font and watch the proceedings. Laurel and Angela sang, "When Jesus Christ Was Baptized," and did a wonderful job. While Dave and Angela got out of their wet clothes, the cousins all sang, "I Am A Child of God" and "I Know My Father Lives".

Following the confirmation Mark and Miriam had their baby blessed and Miriam's mother, an immigrant from Switzerland gave the closing prayer. It was a wonderful meeting! We all gathered in the cultural hall for a delicious lunch that had been prepared by the family. It gave us further time to visit and get reacquainted with the Cottam's. We felt so grateful to have been a part of the occasion and to have Steve, Rachel, and Chrissy there, too. Dave and Andrea will be in Springville for most of this next week, attending several different family functions.

Tomorrow SaraKay and I will pick peas, weed the garden, and Dad's going to get the lawn mowed and watered well before we leave on Wednesday morning.

[Dad] Yes, we are truly blessed to live in this great nation and it was a thrill to celebrate her birthday as Sue has described above. *"I love this great America the land that God has blessed. Where the hope that stirs the hearts of men will never be suppressed. Through the flame of faith came forth a nation choice above the rest. This great America!" (To the tune of Battle Hymn of the Republic)*

We were really pleased to be a part of the events in Springville on Saturday. It was disconcerting to be so foot loose and fancy free on Friday at Steve and Bonnie's. But it was fun to enjoy the parade--

the first one for me for many a year. I'll do anything--even work in the Tiger Ear booth to avoid the parade. Last week I audited another \$5,000 of FOS money and got a few more applications in for membership for the end of the quarter. Last Saturday I took our weed trimmer and cut down all the weeds around the Scout Office and along the alley behind. It really made a big improvement in the appearance. I am grateful for my work and the satisfaction I get from it. Today I met with the pastor of the Foursquare Gospel Church, a Pentecostal church in Blackfoot that seems to have a growing congregation. We were discussing the sponsorship of a new Scout Troop. I have really enjoyed the association I have with other than LDS churches in the area with my job.

July 21, 2003

[Mom] The last couple weeks have been so busy but gratifying in that we have had the opportunity to renew our associations with many of our extended family. Our trip to Phoenix served several purposes including attending the Larsen family reunion, visiting Don and Lisa, and helping Grandpa Larsen get moved and relocated here in Blackfoot.

We left early Wednesday morning for St. George and had a pleasant trip. Steph and Linds loaned us their Harry Potter tapes and we listened to that for most of the way. We arrived at Dad and Alva Lu's home in Ivins about 2:30, unloaded our van, and removed the seats so that we would have the cargo space for Dad's furniture from the Atria. We arrived at the Atria about 3:30 and visited for a short while with the nurse and supervisor who have overseen Grandpa's care during his four-month stay. We then loaded the bed, TV, nightstands, lift chair, and other possessions into the van and got instructions on his medications. Grandpa arranged for us to have dinner with him in a lovely dining room in the Atria before we left for Ivins.

Upon arriving at Ivins, and with the help of a sweet neighbor, we unloaded and moved the furnishings into the house. The temperature in St. George was 118 degrees and we retreated to the comfort of the airconditioned house, not venturing out the rest of the evening. On Thursday we left about eight for Phoenix, driving the Escalade and leaving our van in Ivins. We worried that Grandpa might get too tired on the eight-hour trip but he didn't seem any the worse for wear and we enjoyed the

opportunity to visit, listen to more of Harry Potter, and see some new country.

We arrived at Staff and Kathy's about four that afternoon. They have a lovely home with a big yard and pool which was such a hit with all of us! Janette, Mark and Rita's daughter, had flown in the day before we arrived, and Mark and Rita arrived not long after us. Grandpa stayed at Staff's and we left a while later for Don and Lisa's, which to our surprise, was only a five minute drive away. It certainly made for a convenient situation. We enjoyed the chance to spend some time at their home as well as with the Larsen's.

On Friday morning we gathered at Staff's before driving to the Saguaro Lake to do some boating. Staff took his boat and had arranged for his cousin, Bob Flarity, to bring his boat for the day. Staff towed family members in an inflatable tube and Bob helped the older grandchildren, and Mark, who wanted to try their skill at wake boarding. Cocoa got up and boarded for a long turn before Mark, JoEllen, and SaraKay tried it. Mark had tried it one other time but had never gotten up but Bob was willing to keep working with him and eventually he got up and went for quite a while before toppling. JoEllen tried but never quite mastered it. SaraKay got up but couldn't stay up and did several nose dives before she called it quits. I was riding on Bob's boat and got to hear all his coaching and instructions. It was fun to have two boats.

Kathy packed a delicious lunch of hogis and fruit and we sat in the shadiest place we could find since the temperatures were in the 120 degree range all day. After lunch Dad drove Grandpa and some of the other family members back home while the rest of us went out boating again. SaraKay, Jeanette, and I all rode the tube for a while although Jeanette and I put Staff under covenant to take it easy on us. Jeanette is about six months pregnant and I was just leery of doing anything that might rattle my old bones too much. SaraKay was the pro since a couple weeks ago she went boating with the ward YM and YW and spent a lot of time on a tube behind a boat that day. (By the way, Sara Kay and Corina Jenks were riding one together and were flipped off and SaraKay bruised her nose and Carina broke her arm when she hit SaraKay's face with it.)

Upon returning home we helped Kathy with supper and spent some time relaxing and cooling off in their pool. Jeanie, Scott, David, and Bethany arrived about supper time and we enjoyed visiting

with the family until we left about eight. The next morning when we arrived early to prepare breakfast, we met Chris and his wife and family. They had arrived from Rexburg about two that morning after traveling all night. Thank goodness the house was big and the pool was so fun because the kids spent the day in the pool and the rest of us had a chance to visit and catch up on the news.

Those attending the reunion were Staff and Kathy, Jennifer and her three, Rachel, Ryan, and Riley, Chris and family, Cocoa, Scott and Jeanie with David, Bethany, Miken and her two, Mark, Rita, Jessica, Jeanette, and JoEllen, Dad, me, and SaraKay and Grandpa. We so appreciated all that Staff and Kathy did to pull things together and host.

On Saturday evening I helped Lisa with some cleaning and preparation for her guests on Sunday. Sunday morning while Dad and Sara Kay attended church with the Larsen's, I helped Lisa and Don with some food preparation and then we attended their sacrament meeting to hear Skyler say his good-byes. For the dinner later that afternoon, they had invited several families who aren't LDS but who have been very good friends over the last few years. Some of those who came were involved with Skyler and Chauncey in their Aero-gymnastics program. We met Skyler's coach and saw a video of their Fourth of July performance. It made for a full and rewarding day for their family and we felt happy to be a part of it.

Whitni and Skyler took SaraKay to dinner on Saturday night and to "Pirates of the Caribbean" for her birthday which she celebrated while we were traveling on Wednesday. It was a sweet gesture and gave the cousins a chance to get better acquainted.

Sunday evening after the festivities I called Bonnie's folks who are serving their mission in Peoria, AZ and visited for a while with them. They are certainly having a wonderful experience and loving Arizona and the good people there.

Monday morning we said our good-byes and picked up Grandpa at Staff's. We arrived safely at Ivins late that afternoon only to discover that the air conditioning wasn't working. Daddy tried in vain to get it to work. We spent a warm night, arose and were soon on our way home. We arrived at The Willows, unloaded Grandpa's things, conferred with the management, and arrived home about seven, tired and travel-weary. I drove our van and Daddy and Grandpa brought the

Escalade for Alva Lu's use. It was a long day but we were relieved to have Grandpa closer at hand.

Saturday we made a quick trip to Salt Lake to attend a Richards' barbeque at Kathy and Dick's. Those attending were Kathy, Dick, Abby, Leslie and two boys, Chad and Trish and four, Chelsea and Ryan and three, Steve and Bonnie and five, Don and Lisa, Skyler (who enters the MTC on Wednesday), Chauncey, Abby, and Riley, Don and Deniece, Bradley, Carleen and Carolee, Daddy, SaraKay and I and Grandma Ilene. We enjoyed the chance to be together!

On Sunday our ward celebrated Pioneer Day by having our meetings in the outdoors at the home of Pres. Willard Wray which is now owned by his son, Roger. We decided to invite Grandpa to join us for the day and Daddy picked him up about 10 and brought him out for sacrament and combined RS/Prsthd meeting. Following this we had dinner and then returned him to The Willows. It is so nice to have him more a part of our lives!

Becky and kids came for a couple hours last night and we talked through reunion plans. I have so appreciated Becky and Steph and others of you taking charge of the Sunday night program and Monday night activities. We regret that Shauntel and Randy and Jeff and Jonie and families won't be able to be with us but we know what a long trip it is to make and especially when you have a young family.

Last night after a busy day we sat down and outlined the next seven days until family starts to arrive for the reunion. Thank goodness Daddy is taking some vacation days and able help out around the house and yard. SaraKay is busy getting ready for Girl's Camp which starts next Tuesday. Hopefully we have accounted for all the plans and everything will move ahead with a minimum of problems.

[Dad] The first day Dad was at the Willows he had visits from Rick, Gary, Alva Lu, and me. He has a very comfortable room, but thinks they could learn a few lessons from the Atria in expeditiously serving and handling the food. We haven't figured out how we are going to involve him in this weekend's activities other than seeing that he gets to Ashley's sacrament meeting and to Gary and Linda's report in the Spanish Branch at 9:00.

August 5, 2003

[Mom] It's Sunday morning. Daddy left early for a meeting and SaraKay is sleeping in since it's fast Sunday and she likes to sleep through as much of

it as possible. I've been on the phone visiting with family about Grandpa Larsen and coordinating his day. Alva Lu has been gone with Trina this past week to California for Megan's surgery and she returned home late last night. It has been hard to have her gone. She has been faithful about visiting Grandpa and seeing to his needs and it has kept Daddy and I busy trying to fill in for her. Today she is going to spend the morning with him and then Rick is going to take him to Pocatello for dinner. Yesterday when I was visiting him, he said, "I like being here in Idaho."

This past week he has had several bad falls. Although he hasn't broken any bones, he is black and blue and has bumps and abrasions on his head. We spent all of yesterday with him, trying to make sure that he got the help he needed whenever he got up. I think he is okay with his living situation at the present time, but he recognizes that if he keeps falling, he may have to be moved to another facility. I know that he would appreciate your faith and prayers in his behalf.

This past week was the highlight of the summer for me. For the past several weeks we have been involved with the details of the family reunion, including flight schedules, menus, reservations, and sleeping arrangements. Although there were a lot of preparations, it was very satisfying to have the family together again. It was sweet to have several of you attend our meetings with us on Sunday and to get to show off our family a little.

I appreciate all the efforts that each of you made to participate. When I heard of John's saga in Atlanta, waiting for most of the day on standby to get three openings on a flight so that he and Emma and James could all fly together, I realized the effort that had been put forth for this gathering to take place. We were grateful that their flight home was less traumatic and that they were able to spend the night with Laurel's folks in Cincinnati rather than at the airport.

I appreciated those who put together the Sunday night program honoring Daddy. Just yesterday I had the chance to read the book of letters you wrote and it brought back so many sweet memories. I know that it will be cherished for years to come. Thank you to those who helped with food and clean- up, to Becky for hosting on Monday, to John for the memory book, to Steph for the cute games, to Bonnie for her ideas, and to all of you for being here. When I saw all the visiting going on and the cousins having so much fun, I reaffirmed my commitment to having a

yearly reunion. Daddy and I recognize that all of you won't be able to come every year, but we would like to move ahead and let each of you do what you can.

Mike and Becky (his friend from CA) are coming on Friday to spend the weekend. Although Mike doesn't think the relationship is moving toward marriage, she was so sweet and gracious to him during his stay in CA and he wanted to reciprocate. We have invited Becky and kids to join us for a Friday night cookout since Chet is in CA this week for the yearly convention. We have loved having our backyard area maturing and having the shade from our windbreak.

I need to run. I am meeting Alva Lu at The Willows in a while and helping her take Grandpa to an eye appointment. Tomorrow we will help him get to an appointment in Idaho Falls. It worked well for me since SaraKay and I had already planned to go do some school shopping and we can work his appointment into our time in Idaho Falls. I spent yesterday at an inservice at the school and I have decided to see how I get along another year. My boss realizes that I may have to quit if things become too harried with Grandpa but we are taking it a day at a time. So far it has been manageable. Mom

[Dad] The family reunion was a rich and rewarding time for me as well. How blessed we are to have such wonderful children and grandchildren who are doing what they should to honor their covenants and be obedient to the Lord. Sunday night's premature 60th birthday was a complete surprise and a delight. I have relished the letters and tributes and have read the book twice. I had a meeting with Don Scott yesterday and he had received an electronic copy of the book because he was a contributor. He said he had to quit reading it because he was getting so teary.

I am grateful to have had vacation time the past couple of weeks and hence the time to give to my dad. It was a special experience to take Dave with me to visit him and both of us work him over—shaving, trimming, and so on. Sue and I did that again this past Saturday to get him ready for Sunday. I love my dad. One tough day after he had fallen and bruised his ribs and he didn't feel like getting up because it hurt so much, I had his meal delivered to his room and I sat by his bedside and fed him.

Afterward he reached up and grabbed my hand and said, "You're a good son." What does it take to

have a father introduce you, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased"?? The Savior is a great example of unconditional love, total obedience, and submitting his will to his father's. I also believe that the measure of a son is the kind of father he is. As I read the tribute you kids gave me, I was impressed with the fact that we usually are unaware of the significant lessons that are taught at insignificant times. We rarely envision the long-term effects of some of the little things or habitual things we do.

One of the highlights of the reunion was working together with David to put together the canopy we had over the patio. At 17' x 23' it was a significant structure. We screwed 2 x 4's together and attached it to the house and covered it with a tarp and it withstood the winds we have had this past week. For FHE last night Sue, SaraKay and I dismantled it and stored all the materials for a future construction project.

August 13, 2003

[Mom] We've had a busy and productive week. On Tuesday I helped Alva Lu get Grandpa Larsen to the eye doctor here in Blackfoot. He has been seeing things double and will get some glasses with prisms that hopefully will solve the problem. On Wednesday SaraKay and I went school shopping in Idaho Falls. Enroute we picked up Grandpa and drove him to his condo where we met Alva Lu and then followed her to Dr. Vance's office for an appointment. Grandpa has been having a great deal of trouble with his balance and so the doctor checked his medications and decided to change one of them. He also needed a bone density test and since the technician was gone for lunch, Grandma took us all out to lunch. We then went with them for the test and then helped her get him into the car so that she could drive him back to the Willows. Although it made for a longer day for us, we were able to complete most of our shopping and head for home about five. I appreciated SaraKay's patience with the situation.

It was fun to go shopping with SaraKay. She has been working and saving her money all summer and she had enough to almost completely pay for her school clothes. She is excited about getting back to school and to her friends. She has been such good help to me around the house and garden this summer and I've appreciated her willingness to pitch in with whatever project we are working on.

Tim called to visit on Saturday and we talked about his summer's work. His goal was to sell 150 units and he had to sell 2 this week to reach that goal. His two bosses flew to Houston last week and met with him, praising him for his accomplishments. They tried to recruit him for another summer but he isn't ready to commit to that yet. He recently bought a wonderful laptop computer which has all the "bells and whistles" and he is excited to get to Provo and into his program. His last day is August 26th and he will be driving back in caravan with other guys that have been working for Preventive. He has been so busy that he hasn't done much dating over the summer and he admitted that he isn't looking forward to getting back into that scene again.

I appreciated Paul and Jenny's update. I forgot to ask them on chat how Paul is doing. He took a bad spill on roller blades during his Utah stay and was struggling with his injuries. Daddy and Mike administered to him before the week in Idaho was over. We are praying that he will have a complete recovery.

Mike arrived last Friday with Becky Bjarnason. We had invited our Becky and kids and we had a barbeque and evening of visiting. Becky B. is a lovely, cheerful young woman and we thoroughly enjoyed getting better acquainted with her. On Saturday she and Mike drove to Jackson Hole, did some sightseeing, and attended Pierre's playhouse before returning that evening. They left Sunday afternoon after visiting with Maren (Jeanie and Scot's daughter) and Brock Kirwan.

John and Laurel weren't on chat on Sunday and I need to call them and find out what's happening in their lives. It is almost time for the chicken pox to be gone and hopefully the other kids didn't get them from Eliza. When they posted her picture on their letter last week I couldn't help feeling grateful that she didn't break out until after they were safely delivered home. As it was, we felt like we were smuggling her on the flight wearing long pants, long sleeves and a high neck blouse. Fortunately, she didn't get stopped at the checkpoint and delayed.

Becky had a long week with Chet gone to a national convention until Sunday. She had volunteered to provide the sacrament program at a local assisted living center, The Fairwinds, which is in their ward boundary and she asked me several weeks ago if SaraKay would help out by playing a violin number. We agreed and so Sunday morning at 8:15 we left for Idaho Falls and

participated with the Seely's in sacrament meeting. The residents at the home were so cute with Maddie, Tate, and Larsen. When Maddie and Tate sang a medley of Primary songs, there was an audible "Ah" after they finished. They had really charmed the congregation. The bishopric had placed two chairs up to the microphone for them to stand on to be able to be seen and heard and the minute they began singing and Tate realized that they were being magnified, he stood up on his tiptoes and sang directly into the mike. He looked so pleased with himself when it was over. Following a sweet talk by Maddie, Sara Kay played "Come, Come Ye Saints" and Becky spoke on sacrifice and told several stories of her ancestors and the things they did to lay the foundation for her life. It was a beautiful program and well received. Older people are always so appreciative and kind and many of them went out of their way to express thanks to us for our efforts.

I visited with Andrea about a week ago and they are in the midst of getting kids ready for school. Joseph will be attending kindergarten half days and he is excited about that. Steve and Bonnie hosted Mike and Becky Sunday night and Mike commented that it was a treat to get some one on one time with Bonnie Monday before leaving for his dates that afternoon.

Shauntel and Randy not only hosted but spoke at a youth fireside Sunday night. I'm anxious to hear how it went for them. Randy is enjoying his work and has a decision in the months ahead about renewing his fellowship vs. finding a job in private practice. They have really enjoyed St. Louis and all the wonderful things there are to do there. Randy has been called to serve in the Young Men's presidency and Shauntel has been substituting in Primary. Arch is settling down and doing his best to walk. Life seems a little more manageable for them.

Steph and family hosted Mike for most of last week while he followed up on some blind dates in the Logan area. He appreciated their hospitality and commented later that he especially enjoyed the chance to get better acquainted with Stephani. She included him in on movies, shopping, and helping out around the house. Steph and kids will be coming for an overnigher this Thursday for one last Hurrah! before school starts. We're excited to have them come even if it is for 24 hours!

Daddy is in the throes of Tiger Ears again. I can't believe it's that time of year, but the grain is being

harvested and there is the smell of fall in the air. I have been busy canning beans, making relish and pickles. Our corn is on and that is going to occupy sometime this next week. I am grateful to have most of this being taken care of before my job starts. I better close and give Dad a chance to get in his two-bits. Love, Mom

[Dad] Well, my two bits aren't going to be worth much. I've been attending to all the details of getting ready for another Tiger Ear season-getting schedules out, urging districts to get their recruiting in gear, making decisions and orders for all the supplies, and so on. In addition, I've been following up on many of the details for the last couple of Wood Badge courses for the year. For Blackfoot District I have been getting things geared up for Round Table tonight with a new location, recruiting and training a new Scouting for Food person, writing articles for the Trails, getting things lined out for our Back to School recruiting over the next 6 weeks to 2 months. Next week I will fly out on Wednesday and back on Sunday—I have a four-day training course at the Center for Professional Development outside Dallas. Needless to say, when you add Church and family responsibilities, I have a full and interesting and rewarding life. I am grateful to be enjoying good health and have ridden my bike from here to Salt Lake City and back just since I added the odometer part way through the summer.

I am able to drop in and see Dad just about every day. He is usually alert and glad to see me even though I have been walking him around the hall of the Willows so that he can get some strength back into his legs. He just got his new glasses yesterday afternoon as I was leaving so I don't know how they are working for him yet. Also, Alva Lu has arranged for a physical therapist to help Dad two-three times a week.

Becky shared an article with us from Tufts University regarding some research showing the beneficial effects of weight lifting and supplemental Vitamin D in seniors. I think this may help Dad. I appreciate Rick taking Dad to church and then to Pocatello the last two Sundays. Dad really appreciates getting out, but has enjoyed all the company he has had here.

August 19, 2003

[Dad] For home evening tonight we borrowed a DVD from Dad entitled, "American Prophet." It is the story of Joseph Smith done for Vermont PBS television, narrated by Gregory Peck, and masterfully done! Like many PBS historical

presentations, it utilizes interviews with many religious historians, pictures and images, and some original footage portraying the events being described. Scenes from Carthage and Liberty Jail, Emma and four children crossing the frozen Mississippi, the boxes containing the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum and covered with branches being hauled through the streets of Nauvoo with over 5,000 people turning out to mourn the loss of their prophet were all poignant images bringing to life the historical events that we all are so familiar with. It was a beautiful portrayal and affirmation of the greatness of the American prophet—Joseph Smith and my heart swelled with reaffirming conviction of his role as prophet, seer, and revelator. I was also touched with an appreciation for the sacrifices Emma made to support her husband and vexed with the vitriolic diatribes of his enemies— who were often disaffected saints for one reason or another.

My efforts work wise right now are focused on getting things ready for the Tiger Ear booth at the fair and getting ready to market Scouting to the schools in the area in an attempt to recruit new boys to Cub Scouts that are not currently involved. That means mainly other than LDS boys and getting them enrolled in one of the three packs in Blackfoot sponsored by community organizations— 1) Elks, 2) Rotary, and 3) Methodist Church.

I've seen Dad just about every day and am having some sweet visits with him. He continues to fall but hopefully, the physical therapy he is getting and attempts to strengthen his legs will help ameliorate that problem. How I love him and continue to strive to measure up to the legacy of his example of dedication and leadership. We have been blessed to have some sweet moments with him with those of our family that have visited him at the Willows. I appreciated Maren & Brock's efforts to visit him while they were here. He is so appreciative and tender about little attentions and expressions of love. Visits by Gary and Linda and Rick taking him to be with his family in Pocatello mean a lot to him. His new room, #54, is a little larger and closer to the office so they can look after him more closely and be more responsive when he falls.

I am leaving tomorrow for a short training session in Dallas and won't be back until Sunday. Gary is helping Dad to get to the hospital for some sleep therapy tomorrow night and back to the Willows the next morning.

[Mom] SaraKay's countdown has begun for the starting of school tomorrow. She has packed and repacked her backpack, tried on every conceivable outfit in her closet, and last night attended the final slumber party of the summer. As an added bonus, some boys called and invited her to play night games (steal the flag, kick the can) and it turned out to be the social event of the summer! (Thank goodness school is beginning). Before leaving for the party, SaraKay got permission to toilet paper a neighbor boy's car and that also turned out to be fun albeit a little scary.

As for me, I am trying to get all the work out of her I can before I head back to work next Monday. Yesterday we cleaned off the last of the string beans, picked the last two rows of corn, and got all of it canned or frozen. It feels good to know that these things are pretty much done and I won't have it to do once I start school.

Speaking of school, we had two full days of in-service last week with our new director, Jolene Wallace. I am impressed with her organizational abilities and her desire to solve the problems that plagued us last year. I came home excited about the things we are implementing. They have asked me to handle a music program and so I will be teaching Mozart Math to the kindergarteners and a variation of it to the older children. It will mean more preparation for me but the way the day is structured, I am going to have some time to pull away from the classroom and prepare. It's intimidating, but I think I can add some pizzazz to the kid's daily experience. If any of you have ideas, (Steph gave me a page full) just send them to me.

Monday night Mike arrived home, worn out from the flurry of dating he had done since arriving in Provo the weekend of the 17th. Sara Kay had been patiently waiting for him to come visit when the two of them could have some time together and Mike didn't disappoint her. They made a long list of everything they wanted to do before he left to go back to Iowa including frog and snake hunting, mega games of Frisbee, movies, and a day together having fun in Idaho Falls.

By Thursday they had about done it all and the party around here switched to the Bennion's who arrived at noon from Logan. Prior to them coming, SaraKay and I talked through some ideas for what to do and decided that if they were willing, we would just float our canal. We inflated a small rubber raft, grabbed the inner tube and headed for the canal. Steph and I took a large black

umbrella to give us some shade and we sat on the bridge and visited while the kids enjoyed the water. The temperatures were in the 90's and so we took our shoes off and dangled our feet in the water, keeping us cool as we kept watch.

Soon Mike joined us and we rehashed with him his dating adventures. As you can imagine, we gave him lots of valuable advice, some not so valuable, but mostly we just visited and laughed. Both Mike and Steph have a quick wit and I went along for the fun of it. At one point, Steph commented how silly we looked, huddled under the Mary Poppins umbrella and barefoot, but fortunately we were surrounded by the tall grasses on the canal bank and invisible to passers-by. That's the nice thing about Idaho. It still has some wilderness area where you can kick back and escape the pressures of modern society.

That night we played Cranium. I ended up on a team with Sam and Josh which proved to be the team's downfall. They are so quick and I'm sitting there scratching my head while they are miles ahead, solving the riddles. After a while Mike joined us and that changed the dynamics considerably. What fun!

Mike left early Friday morning to catch some of Becky B's convocation and then Saturday morning he left for Iowa. That night about 10:30 he called to say he was still driving and would arrive in Iowa City in the wee hours of the morning. I appreciated the phone call. Just seconds before the phone rang, I sat down at my desk and thought, "I wonder how Mike is getting along?" It's fun to be on the same wave-length.

Steph and Co. left shortly after lunch for home. They were leaving the next day for St. George to visit Linds' folks and needed to get home and pack. We appreciated their visit! They are a fun bunch to have around, including "Beo".

Friday we went to the temple with Becky. We were overdue and SaraKay owed her some babysitting time so it worked out great for us. Chet was gone on a trip and fortunately missed all the flight cancellations caused by the power outage. I hope Becky will write this week and tell her own story of being in tune and ready.

Let me in closing mention that John and Laurel were affected by the blackout. Power went out for them about four on Thursday and didn't resume until Friday morning. Work shut down for John and he headed home but the short distance took him nearly two hours because of all the problems

without the traffic lights. Because of their food storage preparations, they weren't running around hunting food and water as many in the area were and weren't standing in gas lines for hours. The children took it in their stride, too, and Emma, accessing her emergency fun supplies, was heard to say, "I'm so glad that crayons don't need to be plugged in to work!" John commented that despite the problems with toilets and water, the time together proved to be peaceful and stress-free. Neighbors they hadn't seen for months dropped in to check on them and the rush of things seemed to slow, if only for a few hours. It did give them a chance to evaluate their preparation for emergencies and recommit to keeping their supplies current.

In closing I wanted to comment on Sunday's chat session. We had Tim who just got a new computer, as well as Steph, Shauntel, John, Mike, Paul, and us. (that includes spouses and families.) The topic turned to school and everyone's preparations for the coming new beginnings, focusing on Camille and Emma and their reservations and anxieties. (Maybe I should say Shauntel and Laurel's reservations and anxieties.) Anyway, it is a sweet thought to think of our five kindergarteners, Alex, Joseph, Emma, Camille, and Maddie all beginning this journey this year, full of anticipation and promise. What a wonderful thing! It is a source of joy and pride to Daddy and I that education is a priority in each of your homes and that our grandchildren are receiving encouragement and support in this endeavor.

August 26, 2003

[Mom] Some of you may already be aware of Grandpa's accident last week. On Tuesday he fell and hurt his neck. Alva Lu and Dad took him to the clinic and they found that he had cracked the first vertebrae in his neck. Dr. Dixon referred him to a specialist in Pocatello and it was decided that although the vertebrae was broken in two places, it seemed to be stable. Grandpa was put in a neck brace and told that he would need to wear it for the next eight weeks. What a trial for him!

On Tuesday evening Daddy drove to Salt Lake to catch his flight to Dallas for some training. On Wednesday morning I arrived at the Willows about 8:00 a.m. Alva Lu was already there. She had gone home the night before after getting Grandpa settled but had been notified at 11:00 p.m. that he had fallen. She immediately returned to the Willows and spent the night sleeping in a chair. At about 1:00 a.m. Grandpa fell out of bed again and

then throughout the night he was up, going to the bathroom and walking around. When I arrived and walked over to his bed, I was alarmed at how ashen grey he was. He had a gurgling sound as he breathed and he didn't respond when I first tried to talk with him. We called Gary and Rick and requested that they come immediately to give him a blessing. Within a half hour they arrived as did Jason, Lisa's husband and they administered to him. Soon thereafter his vital signs were taken and it was discovered that his oxygen levels were down. We made the decision to have him admitted to the hospital where he could get the medical attention he needed. So began a three-day vigil at the hospital. Gary and Linda, Alva Lu, and myself and Rick and Terry all tried to spend as much time with him as we could. Wednesday was rugged for him but by Thursday he was making progress and began to communicate with us. One of the most difficult problems was that the neck brace made it very difficult for him to feed himself. The angle of his jaw in the brace also made it hard to chew and swallow. This complicated things so much that they had to prepare foods that were ground up or the consistency of yogurt. We were all very concerned about his weight loss and tried to be there at meal times to see that he got the nourishment he needed.

It soon became obvious to us that he would need more care than he could receive in the Willows and Alva Lu and I visited some care centers, trying to determine just what to do. She felt that the Extended Care Facility associated with the hospital would be the best situation for the present and on Saturday Gary and Rick helped her move Grandpa into the rest home. When Grandpa first fell on Tuesday I emailed news of the situation to all of Daddy's siblings. Several of them did not receive the word and so on Friday morning I called them and by Saturday Staff, Jeanie, Christian, and Karen all arrived to show support and give Grandpa some encouragement. Mark and Rita were in Rexburg for Josh's graduation and were able to also come and spend some time with Grandpa. I know it meant a lot to him to have the family rally around. I was especially appreciative of Jeanie and Staff who traveled long distances to be here for Grandpa.

September 3, 2003

[Mom] It's Tiger Ear time again and Dad is in the thick of it. He leaves here about 7:30 each morning to go stock up on flour, sugar, and oil before the crowds arrive. Sara Kay and I took a

shift yesterday afternoon. I couldn't help comparing the new, revised booth to the old one we used to have. Dad and Don Scott have sure done a great job of keeping the area clean, convenient, and energy efficient. As usual, the biggest headache is making sure that each shift is filled so that there is the man-power to keep the "Ears" rolling off the assembly line. It's always a big relief when the week is over and Dad can put it aside for another year.

Tim finished up his summer employment on Tuesday and drove from Houston on Wednesday and Thursday, arriving in time to attend the BYU-Georgia Tech football game Thursday night. Friday morning he met with his advisor and made sure that he was properly registered. He was a little disappointed with his apartment since the two prior residents had opted to lose their deposit rather than clean things up and the managers hadn't taken care to clean it up either. I told him to write lengthy notes about the condition of things so that when he vacates, he won't be held accountable for the mess they left. Anyway, he got some of his stuff moved in on Friday and then drove home to spend the weekend with us. It was so nice to have him home and to know that his summer was successful and that he has what he needs to get him through a year.

Most of Saturday Tim went through his closets and drawers, the storage room, and even the file cabinets to sort out what he needed to take. He thoroughly cleaned his car, got his bike ready to go, and had an appointment with the eye doctor. By the time he left on Monday afternoon, I felt like he had "prepared every needful thing". That's a great feeling! When I called him that evening to see if he had arrived safely, he sounded tired and a bit overwhelmed. I know the "Y" will take some getting used to but soon he will be in the swing of things and doing great.

Several of you have asked regarding my job. I think I am getting along okay. It's the typical start of year marathon with trying to juggle house, school, garden, and other commitments. It usually settles down after the garden is cleared off and I am not feeling that pressure. Today I moved into a big room that the school has rented (next to the other office complex) until we get moved into our final location, hopefully at Christmas. I don't have my equipment in place yet and it is hard to feel settled until I get some things ready, but today was the first time I had a space to even work in. I am a TA to the kindergarten teacher most of the morning and I have decided that I enjoy the older

groups a little more. I like to tutor them in their math and reading, etc. and the youngest kids are still trying to figure out how to write the alphabet. My intercept and music responsibilities are going to be fun for me if I can just find time to do the preparation. I definitely feel better about what the school is doing this year.

Jolene Wallace is a wonderful administrator and very willing to support us in our efforts. I think we are back on track.

SaraKay is enjoying 8th grade. She has a new strings teacher who doesn't relate very well with the kids, but Linnea has invited that group of kids to join the community orchestra and she has even offered to help them a half an hour before the regular orchestra comes if needs be. I think SaraKay is going to do that since she misses Linnea and enjoys her so much. She has a lot of nice friends in her classes and is feeling a little more at ease with the boys.

Grandpa continues to strengthen. Daddy and I went in together on Saturday and had a nice visit with him. He seemed alert and even quoted and read to us out of a book of writings by Rudyard Kipling. Daddy says he remembers Grandpa reading out of that book to them when they were very small and he has always had a particular liking for Kipling's poetry.

In closing I thought I would tell you of an incident Steve related to me. A couple weeks ago they had stake conference. They were fortunate to have Elder Worthlin as their visitor and in preparations for the big crowds that were expected, Steve helped set up chairs going way back into the gym and overflow area. It was a wonderful conference and lots of good counsel was given. Part way through the first session a briefcase was discovered setting against a wall in the gym.

Since no one seemed to know what was in it or who it belonged to, it became an object of suspicion and it was carefully taken to the stake office area for inspection. At first the stake clerk suggested that it be put outside until the session was over, but after deliberation, the police were called. They in turn called the bomb squad and the suspense grew. If such a high level church leader had not been in attendance, the fear of some kind of bomb wouldn't have been nearly so great. Finally, it was decided that the bomb squad would move ahead and pry the briefcase open to resolve the issue. With the greatest of care they proceeded, eventually breaking the lock and opening the briefcase. Much to their surprise, it

contained a leather set of scriptures with the name STEPHEN R. LARSEN on the front!

Well, to make the long story short, when Steve had helped set up chairs, he set down his briefcase, totally forgetting it when the task was done and he hurried home for Bonnie and the kids. When he was contacted to come claim the briefcase (with a broken lock) he felt pretty foolish but how could he have known that his little black briefcase would create such a stir. He said that they are now both famous (of Ensign fame) and infamous.

[Dad] Mom's report is pretty complete. I have been weary with the unending demands of the Tiger Ear Booth but very satisfied to see how well everything is working out. The only glitch is the one thing I don't have much control over—the recruiting in each district to fill the shifts. With starting as early as I do it is hard to get calls regarding recruiting up until nearly 11:00 at night.

Hutch Hansen reported his mission to the high council tonight (he is the son of Buff Hansen). He said his mission president told them that their mission was equivalent in time to 49 years of attending Church each Sunday for three hours.

President Shipley told us a story about a man from the Rexburg area who had been called to be a mission president. He accepted but needed to sell his home before he could go. It was an upscale home worth about \$600,000 and so he had a rather limited market. One day he was talking to one of the General Authorities on the missionary committee and shared with him the problem. He was asked, "Do you believe that God can do anything He chooses to in accomplishing His work?" He responded with a strong affirmative. It was suggested that he and three others, that were in the same boat, fast and pray that God would help them. They did, and all four homes sold that same day! As to the Rexburg mission president, someone was driving down the freeway, looked around, thought this looked like a nice area to live, exited the freeway, looked at the home and wrote out a check for \$600,000. What a testimonial of the power of faith.

September 11, 2003

[Mom] (Monday) It's a drizzly, overcast day today. We have had quite a bit of rain the last few days and it comes as a welcome relief from the heat in August. The fair is over for another year and Daddy is grateful that things went well (thanks to his advance planning and hours of phone calls).

Sometimes it's a battle getting enough volunteers lined up and then it falls back on Daddy to make calls and fill the rosters. Although he didn't have to be in the booth 24/7, he was never very far removed .

My work at the school has been stressful. I finally have a classroom in which to teach music. I have visited with the elementary music specialist from Blackfoot and she has given me the outlined curriculum for K-5. Using that as a guide, I am gathering ideas from text books and also using Becky's MozartMath for the morning kindergarten class that I teach. It has been so nice to have her program since it comes complete with visuals, a CD, and day by day instructions. So far, so good. My biggest challenge is finding material that the older students will enjoy. On Saturday Daddy helped me get a large whiteboard which I am going to have mounted in my room and use to teach some theory.

The downside is the constant stress of lesson preparation and so I bring my worries home with me. I haven't wanted that. I wanted a job that I went and did and then came home and forgot about it. We'll see how it goes.

One of the advantages of working is that I am able to stop by on my way home each day to visit Grandpa Larsen. He continues to lose weight and hasn't regained his strength in his legs although he has therapy twice a day. On Monday the center ran some tests on his swallowing problems and discovered that his food sometimes ends up in his lungs instead of his stomach. The neck brace is adding to the problem but cannot be removed for another five weeks. All in all, the news regarding his throat was not very encouraging and Daddy, Gary, Rick, and Alva Lu are meeting with Grandpa today and the therapist to talk over the options. They have recommended that he be fed through a tube but for various reasons the family is hesitant to start doing that, as is Grandpa. Please remember him and Alva Lu in your prayers.

Last Sunday I called and visited with Tim about his classes. His first few days were very frustrating as the professor was covering materials that he had never studied. He felt like everyone else in the room had a foundation for the materials, but that he was lost. He didn't want to pay for a private tutor but couldn't see how else he was going to survive. I called him again last night and things were going a little better and he was encouraged. I know that the Lord is blessing him to be able to find the help he needs for this time of transition.

He mentioned how amazing everyone and everything is at the "Y". I had to agree that BYU/Provo is a class act, but I told him that as he gets to feeling a little more at home and gets better acquainted with the other students, he will find that they are just as human as he is and he will start feeling like he is as good as the next guy. I know it can be pretty intimidating at first.

We appreciated the clever and insightful essay on Mike that Bonnie wrote. After Daddy and I read it, Dad commented that she had pretty much summed up the families' feelings on the subject. Thanks, Bonnie. I'm sure the rest of the family enjoyed it as much as we did!

Let me mention that Chet had surgery on his knee today (Thursday). Becky was so sick with some kind of a flu bug that he drove himself to the hospital, had surgery, and drove himself home. Becky was so sick with a headache that she went to immediate care for help with the terrific headache she had been having for two days. Fortunately, some sweet neighbors helped out with the kids while she and Chet took care of themselves. Chet was relieved to learn that his ACL wasn't affected and that his recovery won't be nearly as difficult as it would have.

[Dad] Sue hit the highlights of the Tiger Ear Booth. We ended up doing \$200 better than last year. We had some down days and some up days compared to last year, but ended up positive over all. Some of the cleanup and getting all the extra flour and sugar sold and delivered is a major thrust this week.

We had Roundtable last night and had a pretty skimpy crowd. We have a major training scheduled for this Saturday and I just got an e-mail from my district trainer that he was resigning because of conflicts that keep cropping up between his responsibilities and his Doctorate program that he is working on part time in addition to his work as Seminary teacher and principal in Shelley.

The meeting with Dad, Alva Lu, Rick, Gary, and I along with the therapist ended up involving the dietician, the head nurse, the physical therapist, the occupational therapist and an intern as well. We watched a video of the Barium swallowing test that was run on Dad on Monday. It was really interesting to watch that process and have Sidena explain what was going on. When Dad fell and broke his neck, he also bruised some nerves that help to operate the swallow reflex. Along with the effect of Parkinson's and some diverticular sacs

he just isn't getting things swallowed properly whether it is the consistency of water, honey or solids. His epiglottis isn't closing over at all and much of what he eats ends up going into his lungs. Because of the risk of pneumonia, the medical community recommends tubes. Food is one of the few pleasures Dad has left and alternate procedures are so invasive we came to the conclusion that we would continue as is. If he gets pneumonia, fight it with antibiotics and if that doesn't cut it--so be it.

September 18, 2003

[Mom] I received a phone call from Mike Monday night informing us that he had passed his board exams with a 90% average! What a relief for him to have that behind him and feel like he is going into these next two years with confidence. He has spent most of the last month of school in the clinic with real live patients with real live dental problems. He said it was a little like being thrown into the canal and told to sink or swim. He hopes he can swim and continue to gain confidence in his abilities.

The other day a girl came in who was told that she had a decayed spot forming under an existing filling. The instructions were for Mike to remove the filling, clean out the area and refill it. On a hunch, he examined her x-rays from years past and noticed that the x-rays for the past two years showed the same "anomaly" although the decay did not seem to be any larger now than it was two years ago. When the visiting dentist came by Mike's station to instruct and mentor him in the procedure, Mike mentioned that he had reservations about disturbing the tooth and justified his prognosis with the x-rays. The instructor studied the information, concurred with Mike's assessment and sent the girl on her way. Of course, they will keep a watch on the tooth in question, but it was reassuring to Mike that he had made a correct diagnosis and had done the right thing. (I thought I would give you that bit of "a day in the life of Mike Larsen, the dental student".)

Tim continues to work to compensate for the systems info that he didn't receive at BYU-I. He said that he spent about 10 hours last Saturday in the library studying. It has been a tough road for him although it has been reassuring that when the class materials cover other aspects than "systems", he feels like he can hold his own and is doing well.

Chet's knee seems to be responding well. Although he is on crutches, he has been to work all week and aside from a bad day Monday, he seems to be handling it okay. As for Becky and fam, they are just delighted to have him hanging around a little bit more.

SaraKay and friends have joined the community orchestra. Linnea, in an attempt to lure more young people to their ranks, has selected music that is a little easier and is tutoring this group of students that have been in the strings program since fifth grade. It has been really fun and exciting for Sara Kay. Last week she came home pumped, just like she had played a winning ball game! Of course, it doesn't hurt much to have Zac a part of the orchestra, too!

Daddy has been sick the last few days with a bad cold. I have been trying to keep my distance so that I don't get it, too. A lot of students at our school have been sick with colds and the stomach flu and so I am doubly cautious to get my rest and vitamins. Grandma Ilene is planning to come next Tuesday and stay for a couple weeks with us and Deniece so I'm hoping that we will all be well.

My work keeps me hopping. One thing is certain: I am discovering what does and doesn't work with the different age groups. Each group has their own strengths and weaknesses and I am trying to use that knowledge to help in my lesson planning. Some days I am on cloud nine after a good session and other days I come home ready to throw in the towel.

Grandpa Larsen has his ups and downs, too. When I went in last night, I read to him for a while and then we watched the Weather Channel and the updates on Hurricane Isabel. I asked him how his day had been and he commented, "Just the same". Two days ago I went in after work to visit him and he asked if I knew where his spare foam liner for his neck brace was. I opened his nightstand drawer and showed him that it was in the second drawer. He has repeatedly expressed irritation that the one he is wearing is stained and needed to be changed. I commented that the next time they bathed him, he should be sure to remind them to change the liner since they remove the neck brace when he bathes.

Well, all at once, he took his two hands, grabbed the Velcro straps on the brace and before I knew what was going on, he had undone it and was pulling it out from behind his head. As you can imagine, I thought for sure he was going to wrench his neck and be a goner. Despite my protests, he

continued to wrestle with it until he had it totally off and was lying there with the entire brace in his hand. I hurriedly pressed the emergency call button and shortly a CNA arrived and I showed her what was going on. She very politely refused to get involved saying that she could be sued for helping with a situation that she was not licensed to attend to. She handed the brace back and told me to work it out. Well, between Grandpa and me, we dismantled the brace, removed the stained liner, and reassembled it. After I managed to get the liner replaced, the two of us carefully put it around his neck and he tightened up the Velcro straps. What a scary experience! Looking back, I realize that I should have insisted that the CNA get me some qualified help, but at the time, I didn't know exactly what to do. The whole experience shook me up so badly that when I got home, I totally spaced that I was supposed to go V.T. and later my partner showed up at my door, returning some dishes and informing me that she had gone alone and finished it up!

Best run. Love to all of you. FYI: We are leaving Saturday evening to go to Bennion's for Sam's ordination on Sunday. Will be home about five. Mike is spending the weekend with Paul and Jenny for Paul's birthday.

[Dad] I don't know how far away from home I am going to get today because of how miserable I am with this cold--runny eyes and nose, stuffed up head, and nagging cough. I went to bed last night at 9:30 and slept in this morning until 7:00 in an attempt to shake things. I didn't go see Dad yesterday because of concern about sharing this cold with him. I am grateful that Sue is willing to go in so faithfully--I know Dad thinks she is an angel because of the loving care she gives him. I just wish we had another means of keeping in touch--I know it would mean so much to him to be able to talk on the phone.

My work efforts lately have been focused on school open houses and back-to-school nights and getting to the boys that aren't involved in Cub Scouts and giving them an opportunity to join. One of the most discouraging responses we get are from parents that aren't willing to bring their boys to Scouts. It looks like I am developing a couple of opportunities in grade schools to sponsor a pack that will meet right after school for one hour once a week. According to the newspaper this morning--nearly 14% of the population of Bingham County is Hispanic and we have very few of them involved in Scouts. So that is one area we need to penetrate better.

We are beginning work on our Pioneer Trek for the youth for next year. We have a steering committee selected and we are in the process of choosing Ma's & Pa's and getting them called. In addition, I have organized and kicked off the Pennies-by-the-Inch campaign in our stake and hope to get it wrapped up.

At work I have been promoting and working on our upcoming Popcorn sale and training a new chairperson for our Scouting for Food drive in November. Last Saturday we had a basic training set up and my Training Chairman quit because of conflicts with his doctorate program. I got substitutes and the training went well. I ended up staying there all day and helping with the Scoutmaster Training. This coming weekend I go to a Fall Camporee on Friday night and the Venturing Olympics at Island Park Scout Camp on Saturday. Hopefully, I will be able to get home at a decent hour so we can head to Logan.

October 7, 2003

[Mom] We continue to enjoy beautiful fall weather. It has been pleasant, allowing the harvest to be "safely gathered in" and completed. Last night for FHE we took inventory of our own food storage and talked through what we needed to buy. It is such a boon to have access to potatoes, which really help us stretch our food dollar. Hopefully all of you are working to secure your year's supply.

Last Friday we drove to Logan to drop off Sara Kay at Steph's and to let Grandma Richards see their new home. After a short visit, we continued on to Steve and Bonnie's and enjoyed a visit with Bonnie and family before leaving for Salt Lake. We had arranged to meet Tim in Salt Lake and spend the night with Mom before going to conference the next day. I know Mom was happy to finally be back in her own place. We really enjoyed having her with us and hope that we can convince her to come again.

On Saturday we listened to the morning session of conference at Mom's and then drove to the Hilton and checked in before attending the afternoon session in the Conference Center. It was so sweet to have some time with Tim. He had three major tests the week prior to conference and so he was without a lot of homework over the weekend and could enjoy conference without worrying about his studies. He and Dad attended the Priesthood session together and then we went to dinner with the Shipley's and VanOrden's. Fortunately, dinner didn't take too long and we tuned in to the San

Diego/BYU game upon returning to the hotel. It was an exciting game, made more so by Tim's commentary. He is a true-blue fan! Although it made for a late night, it was fun to stay up until the end and see BYU pull off the win.

On Sunday Tim attended the morning session and Dad and I left for Logan, arriving at Steve and Bonnie's about 11:00. Their family was all downstairs watching conference and the kids were quietly sitting or putting together puzzles. It was so nice to join them for the remainder of conference and then have dinner with them and Steph and Linds before leaving for home. We so appreciate Steve and Bonnie hosting dinner and Steph and Linds keeping SaraKay for the weekend. It made for a much needed get-away for Dad and I. We couldn't have done it without them.

It doesn't seem possible that we are already in October but all the Halloween displays on doorsteps are a sure sign. Daddy rototilled the garden for the last time last week leaving only one row of strawberries to face the winter months alone. The days are getting shorter and there is a dusty haze in the air, so characteristic of farming areas this time of year.

As I drove SaraKay to Linnea's this morning for her piano lesson (5:30 a.m.), I noticed the beet dump with lights blazing and spud trucks already unloading at Liberty Produce. Looking at the fields as we drove along, I felt a twinge of nostalgia for years gone by, harvests completed, and the exhilarating feeling of knowing that the crop was safely gathered in. Spud harvest has been a part of my life, give or take a year or two, for over fifty years. I guess it is natural that driving through the countryside, I would feel a tug on my heartstrings.

[Dad] Sue's letter gives you a flavor of our weekend. It's always sweet to have time with our kids and grandkids. My only problem is getting too sleepy and missing some of the conference talks as a result. I also feel like we end up compressing too much into too small a time period.

Today I went to a grade school during their lunch period and made a brief pitch about joining Cub Scouts. It was fun to ham it up a little and to get their attention with blowing on a horn and showing off a couple of pinewood derby cars. I gave them a flyer that was folded up four times so that they could put it in their sock or shoe to make sure it got home to a parent or grandparent. I hope we get a good turnout at our joining night on Thursday.

Yesterday was an all-day staff meeting in Idaho Falls. I can't help compare how I feel about my job as District Director and how things are going in Blackfoot District compared to a year ago. I had a quarterly review on Thursday and my supervisor commended me on taking a good district and making it better. We have a couple of holes in our organization but things are basically going well. We are gearing up for chartering, next year's FOS fundraising drive, Scouting for Food, Trainings, and a few other miscellaneous things. We had a presentation from Brad Harris about BYU's new degree in Scouting and the challenge the department has from the Brethren to get more LDS into the profession of Scouting.

Tonight was another trek meeting. We are getting organized and geared up for a great Pioneer trek next year for our youth. I know SaraKay is excited and looking forward to it, but also disappointed that it will take the place of girl's camp for next year. We are leaving the wards with the option of having a ward girl's camp if they choose.

My Dad isn't doing too well, even though he has his neck brace off. Some days are better than others. But some days it is very difficult to understand him and sometimes he is confused about what time it is and so on. Other days he is as crisp and bright as can be but those days seem to be fewer and farther between. I am grateful for the loving attention Sue has been able to give him as she tries to go in each day after work. I am able to go in and see him for a few minutes almost every day. Love, DAD

October 15, 2003

[Mom] As some of you are already aware, Grandpa fell on Friday and broke his hip. He was trying to get from his wheelchair to the bed and lost his balance. The break is very near the top of the femur, but fortunately the top of the bone didn't break off or he would have had to have a hip replacement which is a much more complicated surgery. The orthopedic surgeon was not able to perform the surgery until yesterday and so for Friday and Saturday Grandpa was heavily sedated so that he would lie still and not further injure his hip.

Sunday morning Alva Lu and her daughter, Jalene, as well as Gary, Rick, Dad and I gathered before Grandpa went in for surgery and the three sons gave him a blessing. He was taken in for the operation about 1:30. By 3:30 the surgery was over and Grandpa was in the ICU unit for a while before being taken to his room. Staff flew in from

Phoenix Sunday afternoon and has spent today day with him and given Alva Lu a much-needed rest from the vigil she has kept at his bedside since receiving word of the accident Friday morning.

When I visited Grandpa today, he looked pretty frail but Staff said that he was eating well and that his vital signs are good. The therapist got him up for a few minutes today and will continue to do so each day. The technology for this kind of surgery (securing the break with a screw and rod down the femur) has improved to the point that the patient is able to stand on the broken leg much quicker than used to be possible. Remember Grandpa and Grandma in your prayers.

Daddy and I attended a stake presidency retreat at the Shipley's cabin in Star Valley Friday night and Saturday. We left here about 4:30 on Friday and enjoyed the ride to Star Valley. Although many of the vibrant fall colors have faded by now, the Palisades area was interesting to see. Comparing the water line of years past with the present one gives graphic proof of our area's need for heavy snows this winter. It was good news when we heard that Henry's Lake in Island Park received a snow storm over the weekend. We even had a few flakes in Star Valley.

It is always a pleasure to attend the annual retreat hosted by the Shipleys. They have a beautiful cabin, nestled in the pines and quakes and adjoining a golf course. The cabin has four bedrooms, three baths, and lots of room to lounge. We had wonderful meals, a good planning session, and lots of time for relaxation. I suspect this may be our last retreat as President Shipley has been in for nearly nine years and is anticipating a release soon. It's been a pleasure for Daddy to work with him and Pres. Van Orden and other members of the stake family.

Last Wednesday was the monthly Roundtable for all Blackfoot District scouters. It is held in the Snake River Jr. High auditorium and is on the same night as orchestra. When I went to pick up Sara Kay from orchestra, I couldn't believe the crowd at the school. I couldn't find a single parking space anywhere and finally ended up parking in the roadway for a while until someone left and I could have their spot. When Daddy got home I commented on the problem I had parking and he said that they had an outstanding Roundtable and an amazing representation from nearly every one of the 41 units in this district. I know that Daddy's many efforts are bearing fruit

and that the scouters in this area are pleased to have him as the district executive.

[Dad] Last night was our annual FOS kickoff meeting and dinner. We held it at the Catholic parish hall here in Blackfoot with food brought down from BYU-Idaho. We had a pretty good crowd and accomplished part of our objectives. I always dislike the length of time we hold people for some of our meetings—this one in particular. I get pretty involved in filling the cracks on meetings here in Blackfoot with chasing down things that someone forgot or attending to other details. My schedule was complicated with a joining night that I had scheduled at the Blackfoot Scout Shop, but I had help to cover that. We had put flyers in the Sunday bulletins for the Catholic, Methodist, and Baptist churches and an extra push from each of the ministers involved. But last night was a bust and I hope we get more response on the alternate night, which is Thursday night.

Monday night for FHE SaraKay prepared the lesson. She did a great job regarding developing our talents. One of the assignments was for us to come prepared to talk about someone who had been instrumental in our lives with developing our talents. Both Sue and I independently came up with my mom. Sue mentioned Grandma Barbara's influence in decorating and music. I mentioned her influence with music, trumpet, and singing. I also mentioned Marlin Bingham, my Arts and Crafts teacher in 8th grade and Mrs. Whitworth, my 3rd grade teacher and their influence with regard to crafts and leatherwork.

To conclude the lesson, SaraKay had made a batch of clay and we used some Pictionary cards to tell us what we had to model; we had a great time!

Sunday was a full day made fuller with spending the time at the hospital with Dad and participating with my brothers administering to him. It was rewarding to be able to do that for Dad's benefit. We were impressed with Dr. Lee, the orthopedic surgeon who did the surgery.

The theme we came up with at the Stake Presidency Retreat in Star Valley to guide us in ward conferences and stake conferences and so on for this coming year was: Millennial people focus on spiritual survival—by knowing and loving the Savior, walking by faith, and finding joy in the journey. That is the gist of it, anyway. We had brainstormed with the high council and as a presidency about concerns and needs within the

stake and it was amazing how many of them were covered by that statement.

October 21, 2003

[Mom] It's a beautiful fall day today. Our weather has been unseasonably warm the last few days so we have done all we could to get the last of the yard work done. I'm grateful for the break from yard and garden that winter provides. Usually I am ready to hibernate for a few months and enjoy life indoors. I didn't feel like that when I was a young mother with toddlers. I felt so cooped up by the time we got to February that I was sure I was going to lose my mind. Probably some of you can identify with that.

I'm driving SaraKay to school this morning so she can find out if she made the ball team. They are selecting an A and B team, involving 16 girls so we feel that she has a pretty fair chance of making one of them. There were 23 girls who tried out.

(Afternoon) I just got back from visiting Grandpa Larsen. He was in quite a bit of pain with his leg and I was grateful that I was there. I guess they had him do therapy this morning and his leg was really hurting but he wasn't scheduled for another dose of painkiller yet so he was toughing it out. I'm not sure that is necessary and I am going to talk to Alva Lu about it. It seems like we have to keep on top of things to make sure that he gets good care.

Jeanette (Mark and Rita's daughter) had her baby last Wednesday. She was in labor for a long time and they finally took it c-section. I guess the cord was wrapped around the baby's neck and the monitors indicated that there were problems. What a relief that both mom and baby are doing fine! Mark and Rita have been in Rexburg staying with them and helping with the baby. This is their first grandchild and it's been so nice for them to be able to be there to help. They are coming for dinner tomorrow.

P. S. I just received word that Grandma Ilene has been hospitalized with pneumonia. Kathy said that she got really sick about midnight on Friday and continued to go downhill. She is in the St. Marks Hospital but is requesting no phone calls. Also, Alva Lu is scheduled for a hysterectomy a week from this Thursday. She will need a couple weeks of bed rest and then have a 6-8 week "take it easy" time before getting back into her normal routine. I know this will be hard on Allan but he is

aware of the problems and knows it needed to be done.

[Dad] For FHE last night SaraKay talked us into going to see "Finding Nemo" at the \$3.00 theatre in Idaho Falls. We thoroughly enjoyed it--though us old hoagies couldn't quite follow all the jokes and innuendos.

Sunday was a pretty full day. After our presidency meeting we met with the Stake YW for half an hour and the Stake YM for half an hour. Then I went to visit the three wards meeting in the Moreland building. That was refreshing to feel the sweet spirit in those wards and to see how they have grown.

It was a real change of pace to have a free Saturday for a change. I got the lawn mowed and a lot of cleaning up and gathering for the winter. I had trouble with the lawn mower when the tie rod broke and each front wheel headed in a different direction. I fixed it well enough to finish the job and get it parked for the winter. The water is out of the canal and we won't be watering any more. The pump is getting to be so noisy we are really concerned about it and have called a pump company to come and pull it today to check it and replace it if necessary.

I could sure use your collective wisdom and ideas. Last week I mentioned our stake theme for the coming year: "Millennial people focus on spiritual survival--coming to know and love the Savior, walking by faith, and finding joy in the journey." In stake conference I have to talk about the last phrase--finding joy in the journey.

Last Friday night, Sue and I were guests of Larry and Leslie Mickelsen (our most active and supportive Scout leaders from the other than LDS community) for a progressive supper. We went to the Baptist Church for appetizers, the Episcopal Church for soup and salads, the Methodist Church for the main course, and then the Lutheran Church for desserts. It was a great experience for us to be able to visit each of those churches, visit with friends and acquaintances, and while we were there to kind of tour each of those churches and get a feel for what goes on there. We were welcomed everywhere we went and had a wonderful time. At the last stop, we met three German young men who are here working for Grimme which just completed the buyout of Spudnik. We were really impressed with them and their command of the English language and felt that they really ought to be exposed to the missionaries while they are here. They live close to

Bill Hammond and he is a ward missionary and we are discussing them with him.

Well, like Sue, I need to run. The well people are here and it looks like we are going to have to replace our pump, pressure tank, and pressure switch. Never a dull moment.

October 28, 2003

[Mom] Several of you have asked regarding Grandma Ilene. She has had a rugged week. It seems so crazy that about two weeks ago she had her annual physical and was given a clean bill of health. In fact, her doctor commented that she was one of the healthiest 81-year-olds that he had ever seen. Then on Friday night about midnight she became deathly ill and by Sunday she was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia.

After a blood test, it was also determined that she had a rare, highly communicable blood disease called MRSV. The doctors were puzzled as to where in the world she would have come in contact with this disease. Well, it was a double whammy that would have leveled anyone, and Grandma was so ill that she could hardly lift her head off the pillow. One night, while dreaming, she fell out of her bed and fortunately a nurse was walking by and got her back into bed. She hadn't broken any bones and the next morning did not have any recollection of the incident except that she remembered having a dream and trying to get to the bathroom.

Kathy has been at her bedside most of the week and has been good to give us daily updates. For a while Grandma's body was not fighting off the infection and the prognosis was pretty grim, but yesterday the white blood cell count declined and she appeared to be stronger. I have been on the phone with my siblings several times this past week, debating whether I should make a quick trip to Salt Lake, but Kathy said that because Grandma is still infectious, she is in isolation and I wouldn't be able to get in to see her if I did go. Also, with her upgraded condition yesterday, Kathy feels like she might be permitted to come home this next week and if so, she is going to take round-the-clock care for a while. Between the siblings, we are hoping to be able to do that until she recovers sufficiently to be on her own again.

I appreciate Kathy's time and efforts on Mother's behalf. I've also appreciated the daily updates so that we felt like we were a part of things. Please continue your faith and prayers in Grandma's behalf.

Let me also say a few things about Grandpa Larsen. He has made an amazing recovery from his broken leg. Each day the therapists get him up and walking and although it is very strenuous, he is strengthening and looks as healthy as he has for many weeks. Last week Karen drove down on Tuesday to spend the day and Mark and Rita with JoEllen and Jessica also drove from Rexburg to spend some time with him. We hosted a dinner for the bunch that evening and it was so fun to visit over supper. Mark mentioned that he has applied at BYU-I for a teaching position. It is quite a lengthy and involved process and the short list and interviewing probably won't even take place until January, but they have been house hunting in the Rexburg area and seeing the possibilities there. It would be a big change for their family, but I think they are excited about the prospects. Of course, we would be delighted to have them closer.

Alva Lu and Karen left about 7, but Mark and Rita and girls stayed and visited until nearly ten. What a fun evening for us all! We got to visiting about the "good 'ol days" and memories Daddy and Mark have about their childhoods being raised on a farm. Daddy left on Thursday for a Wood Badge Director's conference in Utah. Sara Kay and I kept the home fires burning although she hasn't been home much with her commitments to the basketball team now.

I think she is enjoying the opportunity to play ball and is feeling more comfortable with the other players. As yet there hasn't been an A or B team designated so the girls all just play together. SaraKay has mixed emotions about which team she will be on since most of her friends are probably going to be on the B team and she would enjoy that group better but on the other hand, the A team would give her a lot better chance to improve her skills. We'll see how it shakes out. Her first game is Tuesday against Blackfoot.

Our missionary efforts with the Luna's are still progressing, albeit slowly. I visited with Mrs. Luna on Tuesday night when I went to get the girls for our ward's annual Halloween roller skating party. I was, in broken Spanish, trying to tell her what time that I would have the girls home from the party, and she told Claudia to tell me that she would trust them with me any time. That's a good sign. The missionaries were supposed to get her permission this past week so we are waiting on word from them. There is also another Mexican girl who has already agreed to join us for the discussions so we are excited for that, too.

I better close. It was fun last night to have so many join us for chat. We are looking forward to Nate's baptism this weekend and a few hours with the Logan bunch. On chat David said that he made an emergency trip to the hospital yesterday with a highly infected ingrown toenail. Hopefully that is on the mend.

[Dad] I'm fasting this morning because I'm going to the clinic for a blood workup for my quarterly diabetes checkup tomorrow with the doctor. For FHE last night we carved a couple pumpkins and reviewed some of the Apostle Paul's history and last journey. SaraKay had a bunch of homework and stuff to get done. She had ball practice yesterday morning and a friend, Stephanie Kunz, who is moving into our ward but is currently living in Pocatello until their home is finished came Sunday night and stayed over for ball practice. The two of them certainly were able to keep a constant stream of chatter going!!

Sunday was a sweet day of meetings and interviews. I so enjoy working with President Shipley. He had a meeting in Idaho Falls with Elder Rollie Walker, Area Authority Seventy, and learned a few interesting things. First of all, stake presidents will no longer be released by computer. So, who knows whether next November will bring a release or not. Also, President Hinckley said there is nothing in the handbook to limit a bishop's service to five years. Regarding these major callings—more inspiration should be utilized in determining tenure.

The Wood Badge Course Director's Conference was a great experience. It certainly renewed and strengthened my conviction of the inspiration behind the Church's involvement in the Scouting program and the necessity of this level of training. I will be involved as Chaplain on a course next August, the second and fourth weekends. I would challenge those of you in Scouting positions to seriously examine your schedules to see if you can't work in that course. It would be a thrill to be able to share that great, life-changing experience with you.

One of the highlights of last week was giving blood. I don't know how many times I have given blood over the years, but I know it has been quite a few. I always like the feeling of giving something so vital that may make a difference in someone's survival. By the way, we just learned this morning that Claudia Wray passed away last night. You might include Farrell and family in your prayers.

November 5, 2003

[Mom] First let me give you an update on the grandparents. Alva Lu is home from the hospital and doing well. Her daughters have been with her almost every day and that has really helped out. We are trying to visit with Grandpa Larsen every day. He really misses Alva Lu's visits. I know that he has worried about her so we always help him call her when we visit.

He has been having therapy for his throat and vocal cords. The therapist is helping him get more air through his vocal cords so that he can be understood better and it has really helped. Also, they have been working to strengthen his throat responses so that he can swallow quicker and move the food better. It is interesting to see all the techniques they use to improve his quality of life. His leg seems to be healing and responding to the daily walks and therapy. The sessions really wear him out and he dreads them, but he is a good sport and does what they tell him to do.

Grandma Ilene is due to come home this Friday. Nate and Maureen are planning a trip to Salt Lake this weekend to help out since this weekend is a bad one for me with stake conference and all the responsibilities associated with that. I've called Grandma every day and she still sounds pretty weak but I guess she is no longer contagious so the doctor feels that she will do all right at home. It's been a long ordeal for her. We're grateful for her recovery.

SaraKay has enjoyed her basketball experience but it has been a trick keeping her well. She is a good solid player and I think the coach appreciates her on the team. This Thursday she has a game in Preston so it will be another long day for her. Her season goes until the middle of December.

My work has kept me on the run. Having class presentations to prepare for has put a lot of worry into my job this year that I haven't had previously. I feel good about the music program that I am running.

The highlight of the week was a visit from Randy. He has been in Idaho this past week to visit his step-brother who was dying of cancer. He was serving a mission and became very ill so they sent him home. He was diagnosed with brain cancer. When Randy called to visit with his sister about the prognosis, he could tell that the cancer was in the advanced stages and he felt like he needed to come for the family. By some strange coincidence,

a cousin on the other side of the family was killed in an accident while Randy was here and so he was able to be there for that funeral as well.

Monday night Randy dropped in following the funeral and we had a wonderful visit. When he left, Daddy and I both commented on what a good man he is and how grateful we are to have him in the family. We are proud of his accomplishments. He tried to explain to us some of the "cutting edge" developments in the field of radiology and it was absolutely fascinating.

P.S. No sooner had I sent the message than I realized that our quick trip to Logan for Nate's baptism should have been included in this week's events. I think we are so busy that the days just run together. I certainly want to mention the wonderful time we had with the family. Nate was one of six or seven boys in their stake who took part in the baptism. He and Steve looked so handsome in their white clothes. It doesn't seem possible that Steve and Bonnie have their second child old enough to be baptized! They had invited both families to join them for the day and had a large crowd there including Shannon and Doug, Joel and Kim from Idaho Falls, Tim, Steph and Linds, Bonnie's aunt Celia and Uncle Vaughn and their married daughter, as well as SaraKay and me.

Daddy had an all-day University of Scouting held here at our high school and just couldn't get away. I had worried about making the trip without Daddy but the roads were clear and we made the trip without incident. It was a surprise to us to see the amount of snow in Cache Valley! It was a winter wonderland!

It was a treat to have Tim with us for the event. He spent Friday night with Steve and Bonnie and related to us that Steve had spent several hours tutoring him late into the night. I really appreciated their sensitivity to Tim's needs. The next morning before the baptism Nate asked Tim to be one of the witnesses. He told Bonnie, "I feel sorry for Tim having to study on Halloween. I'll have him be a witness so he can have some fun." It was a little comical that when the presiding authority announced that the children could all come up to view the baptism Tim immediately stood up and walked to the front. I didn't realize that he was being a witness and I thought for a moment that he wanted to join the kids by the font. Anyway, I told him later that it struck me funny until I realized what was going on.

November 12, 2003

[Mom] Our conference weekend is over. It feels good to have our talks done and that pressure removed. I think we both felt pretty good about how they were received. Daddy had to speak in three sessions and I didn't envy him that. It is always hard to be preparing two talks simultaneously.

Daddy's work never seems to let up. Last Friday the scouts held their annual Holiday Auction. On Friday Daddy spent all day helping set up and then all evening until 11 p.m. helping dismantle the area.

SaraKay and I helped for most of the evening. We were a tired bunch by the time we arrived home and got to bed about 11:30 that night.

Keeping up with SaraKay has been a trick lately. She has basketball practice every night after school unless they have a game (Tuesday and Thursday). She has orchestra on Wednesday evening and the girl she is fellowshiping needs a ride and she lives nearly to Blackfoot. We did have our first missionary discussion with her Monday night. It was a sweet experience. Claudia has lived among the Mormons and read "The Work and the Glory" so she knows a little bit about the doctrines of the church. It was interesting to hear her questions. Hopefully she will continue with the discussions.

Alva Lu is feeling a little better each day although her progress is slower than she would like it to be. Grandpa seems to be getting along alright. I try to go in to see him each day after work. He always looks so nice, and although it is difficult to understand everything he says, he is having therapy and that has helped his speech considerably. I will be leaving on Thursday for Salt Lake where I will stay with Mom through the weekend.

[Dad] Last week was a busy one—especially the weekend. Much of the week was spent procuring donations from businesses for our annual holiday auction. All day Friday was spent in Pocatello setting up and getting ready for the auction which opened at 5:30 with the silent auction and going until about 10:00 and then clean up and dismantling everything. It really makes for a long day with most of it spent on my feet.

About three o'clock I met with a couple who were on their way to Salt Lake City for a wedding in the family and needed the third signature on their

recommends. It was an unusual environment to perform that duty but we got the job done.

We had our stake conference over the weekend, beginning with the all adult session on Saturday night at 7:00. I conducted and Sue was one of the speakers. She was assigned the topic of our home as a school and the things that should be taught there. As usual, she did a wonderful job and received a lot of favorable comments from people who attended. We had a bit of a conflict with the state football tournament as Snake River was playing Teton at 5:00, but we had a great crowd anyway.

Sunday morning at 7:00 we had a priesthood leadership session. President Shipley had assigned me the task of reviewing the counsel we had received as priesthood leaders from general conference. I had spent the time to read through every conference talk pulling out phrases and direction which should apply to the priesthood leaders of the stake. There was some marvelous counsel and I was able to cover the assignment in about 15 minutes.

We then had two sessions of conference at 9:00 and at noon. I spoke about finding joy in the journey and felt like I did quite a good job and received quite a few compliments. I started out with the poem about good timber does not grow with ease and how this life wasn't meant to be easy; that it is through the experiences of this life that we grow to become more like the Savior. I discussed six principles that would help us to find joy in the journey despite the trials and difficulties we face.

Walking by faith and coming to know and love the Savior were the first two and were discussed by President VanOrden and President Shipley in their talks. The other principles that I spent more time on were gratitude, humility, joy with fellow travelers, forgiveness, and keeping an eternal perspective.

November 18, 2003

[Mom] I enjoyed my time with Grandma Ilene. I was amazed at how much she improved in the two days I was there. On Thursday she was still pretty weak and doing a lot of coughing, especially at night, but by Saturday she was a lot perkier and her coughing had subsided noticeably. I know that there have been a lot of prayers offered in her behalf and she mentioned her appreciation several different times. She was alone on Sunday night, the first time in over a month that she didn't

have hospital staff or family nearby and she said she shed a few tears. But, she knows that she can do it now that she is feeling stronger.

My trip coming and going to Salt Lake had some anxious moments as I encountered rain, sleet, snow, wind, and an accident involving several vehicles in the Woods Cross area. The visibility was low because of the rain and it looked like a semi and several cars had collided. It backed up traffic for several miles but I left early enough that it was still daylight when I got to Salt Lake and it was much easier driving than it would have been in the dark. I appreciated Daddy taking care of shopping, cooking, cleaning, attending SaraKay's ballgame and concert on Saturday. He and SaraKay are a pretty good team.

I appreciated all the calls, cards, and gifts on my birthday. We had been so busy around here that SaraKay hadn't had time to go to town for a gift for me and she felt badly. When I arrived home Saturday evening, she had baked a cake and frosted and decorated it, hung balloons from the cabinets, written sweet notes she put into the balloons and bought me a gift. I thought it was so sweet that I left the balloons and Happy Birthday banner up until Daddy caught his head on it later that night and I moved it into the dining area. SaraKay asked me when I was going to take down the balloons and I said when they shrivel up and die because every time I go in the kitchen I feel happy just seeing the remains of my birthday party! Anyway, I had a special day thanks to all of you.

Grandma Larsen is still pretty laid up with her surgery so when I go see Grandpa I help him call her since he has a difficult time using the phone. It has been so hard for him to have Alva Lu laid up and he misses her visits and care. She has a post op appointment tomorrow with her doctor and hopefully he will give her permission to drive so she can come see Allan. Please remember them both in your prayers.

My work stress had been relieved a little now that I have settled on what we are performing for our program on December 8th. We also have a Christmas Tree Fantasy performance on the 5th which will be a good rehearsal for us before facing the families of the students on the 8th. I am grateful that we are getting this done early in the month. It gets so hectic.

Tomorrow is our 5:45 a.m. piano lesson. SaraKay and I both feel like zombies for most of the day if we don't have an early bedtime on Monday.

[Dad] I have been fighting a cough for about two months and finally went to the doctor last week. When I was in two weeks earlier for my diabetes follow-up, he had said I just had allergies and to get a humidifier and a nasal spray. This time, he decided I had bronchitis and prescribed three other medications including an interesting inhaler. I'm starting to see some progress at last.

I enjoy my daily visits with Dad. Sometimes I read to him or recite poetry or just visit about what is happening in the family. He enjoyed sharing my conference talks. He is doing quite well with all his therapy and Sidenia says he can now drink unthickened liquids because he is swallowing so much better. We had a scare a few days ago when he fell while brushing his teeth because he stood up and was trying to read something that was upside down and he lost his balance. As long as he stays in his wheel chair he does fine. The staff really take good care of him and seem to enjoy him. He is always clean and well-groomed and the ECF (Extended Care Facility) usually is clean and pleasant smelling.

Last Friday was the Idaho Falls Auction and Sara Kay and I went to it and had a fun time. Then we went to our cheap movie place to see "The Book of Mormon Movie". We enjoyed it but felt it was melodramatic in a few places. I went to her game on Thursday after Sue left for SLC and watched them win again. We slept in on Saturday and then I helped a little with the Scouting for Food collection point at St. Vincent de Paul.

Sunday was a sweet day as we sustained Richard Tominaga to replace Troy Goodwin in our bishopric. Richard was ordained a High Priest by Bruce Ellis and I set him apart as a counselor. I know he will be a real workhorse as a counselor and our bishopric won't miss a beat. Sunday night I also had the opportunity of speaking at our stake Priesthood Preview. We have 22 boys in the stake turning twelve in the coming year. I talked to them about the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and gave them each a card with the purposes on. Each of our wards recite this every Sunday in Priesthood Meeting. *"As a bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood I will: become converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live its teachings; serve faithfully in priesthood callings and fulfill the responsibilities of priesthood offices; give meaningful service; prepare and live worthily to receive the Melchizedek priesthood and temple ordinances; prepare to serve an honorable, full-time mission; gain as much education as possible; prepare to become a worthy husband*

and father; give proper respect to women, girls, and children." Dalon Esplin had spoken earlier in the program and had them stand and recite the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. I challenged them to memorize the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and be able to say it as well as they did the Scout Oath and Law.

December 3, 2003

[Mom] I'm assuming that everyone returned from their Thanksgiving festivities safely. Hopefully you are feeling refreshed, at least in spirit if not in body. I know I have been dragging around a little today from all the activity of the last few days. Tim arrived home about noon. It was the first time he has been home since he left for school last August and it felt good to have him here. Dave and Andrea drove from Boise Thursday morning and Becky and Chet arrived a little before noon. Although it was a smaller group, we had a wonderful time and enjoyed being together. Steve, Rachel, Nathan, and Chrissy arrived Friday about five and after dinner and the kids went to bed, we had a killer game of Scrabble. Andrea and I kept the conversation going while SaraKay, Steve, and David battled it out. I couldn't believe the scores they racked up! The grandkids slept in sleeping bags on the game room floor and we got along great.

Saturday morning Daddy picked up Grandpa from the rest home at about 10:30 and brought him out for a haircut, some visiting, and lunch. It was fun to have him in our home again. It is quite a trick to help him get around but certainly worth the effort. Following lunch, he took a nap in Dad's chair while the kids and dads went to the stake center to play ball. He was ready to go a while later and Daddy took him back. Steve and kids left a while later for Logan and we spent the balance of the afternoon practicing for our musical number for sacrament meeting. Sue Fife figured that we would have some family home for the weekend and asked that we do a number. We sang a Beebe Sounds hymn that featured a male trio in the middle that was just right for Daddy, David and Tim. Andrea, Laurel, and Anna Sue sang soprano with SaraKay and me on alto. SaraKay is getting really good at hearing the alto part although she prefers soprano. So fun!!

As a part of our celebration Becky and Chet brought a pinata and after dinner we all cheered as the kids took turns trying to crack it open as it swung from the garage rafters. Becky had invited Dave and Andrea's kids to write the names of

things they were thankful for on small pieces of paper and they included them in with Maddie, Tate's, and SaraKay's in the pinata. When it cracked open the children gathered candy as well as slips of paper and we all sat around as each child read their lists. It was a fun activity that served to remind us again of the Lord's many blessings to us.

[Dad] It was nice to take off Wednesday from work and feel a little more relaxed for the balance of the week. Thanksgiving was a wonderful time with family! I am so grateful for the sweet relationships that exist between family members and the lack of contention, jealousy, and competition.

One of the things I did Tuesday afternoon was to take Dad to visit his sister, Jerry Geraldine, in Rose/Firth area. It was the first time he had been out of the ECF since breaking his neck three months ago. When we arrived, Jerry was in her bedroom and I had to go help her into her wheelchair and get her maneuvered into the front room where Dad was sitting in his wheelchair. It was so poignant to see brother and sister knee to knee in their wheel chairs talking and holding hands and expressing their love for each other. Two days later, on Thanksgiving, Jerry would be turning 93. She is a remarkable lady! One of the primary topics of conversation was gratitude to Dad for sending the missionaries that finally converted Eldro. She told about Eldro's baptism and how he was struggling and fighting against going under and the older missionary who was sitting by her said to the younger one doing the baptism, "Just do it!" and he did. They were blessed to be able to go to the temple a couple times before he died and Jerry credits Dad with helping to make all that happen. She was leaving the next day to go to Arco to spend Thanksgiving with one of her daughters.

Dad really appreciated going to Rick and Terry's for Thanksgiving. He especially enjoyed Edith's pecan pie and being with their family.

On Saturday I brought him out here to see the family and get his hair cut and all the wild hairs trimmed. We had a sweet time with him here and I know it means a lot to him to get out of the ECF after so long. It doesn't take very long until he wants to get back. He feels a certain security there where he has the trained help to assist with his basic needs and a more compatible situation for his limited mobility. Stairs are nearly impossible and wheelchair access through regular

sized doors and on carpet is very difficult. Most of the time he is pretty happy but sometimes he is discouraged and full of melancholy over his situation. I know there is a lot of sameness in every day and he looks forward to every visitor and break in the routine.

Monday night we found out that Bonnie Moon had arranged for her annual "Name That Tune" session in the ECF at 6:30. Dad was interested and wanted to go. We went in early and found him almost all ready for bed and had to get him dressed and wheel him to the lunch room for the program. President Bowman would play a few bars of a Christmas song and the residents would guess the name of the tune, get rewarded with cookies or candy, and then everyone would sing that song. Interspersed between some of the songs were scripture readings of the Christmas story. It was a neat experience. We have helped Bonnie before with the program, both at the ECF and at State Hospital South, but it was more meaningful to be a part of it through Dad. I am so grateful for the patient and thoughtful people who go out of their way to give a small measure of service and comfort to those of limited capacity.

December 12, 2003

[Mom] This past week has been very busy with the upcoming holidays. Friday was the Charter School's performance at the Christmas Tree Fantasy and I spent most of the previous days pulling the small groups and rehearsing their numbers with them. I felt good about how we did although we were so crowded on the small stage that it was wall-to-wall kids.

On Wednesday we spent the afternoon rehearsing in the gym at Stalker Elementary for our parent concert and by the time we were through, I had a pretty good idea of just what we couldn't do. I had to totally rewrite the script and order of musical numbers because the children had to be moved on and off the risers each time another group performed. The risers were so narrow that there wasn't room for chairs and consequently it made it much more difficult. I spent several hours over the weekend trying to figure a "flow chart" to minimize confusion and give each child maximum exposure during the program. Since we were unable to hold another rehearsal in the facility, we had to know in detail the "who goes where, and when". That made the whole situation much more difficult for both the students and staff members.

I was at the school for 8 1/2 hours on Monday setting up chairs, decorations, and sound

equipment. By the time we finished that night at 9, I was pooped and so grateful to have it behind me. I felt good about how well it went. SaraKay attended with me but Daddy came home sick from work and spent the night throwing up. He felt pretty rummy for a couple of days but seems to be doing better now.

On Saturday Becky and Chet took us to lunch for Daddy's birthday. Following this, we all went to the Christmas Tree Fantasy where Maddie performed with her fiddling group and also did a solo. It was so fun to be a part of that and see her progress.

Sunday we invited Grandpa to go to church with us. We received an e-mail from Jeanette (Mark and Rita's daughter) informing us that Josh was going to bless their baby on fast Sunday in our ward and we thought Grandpa might enjoy participating in that. Daddy left about 10:00 to go to the rest home to get Grandpa while Sara Kay and I left early to go to church and get the things from the library that I needed for my lesson. About 10:45 we were in the chapel and Gary and Linda, Rick and Amanda, Mark, Rita, Jessica, Jeff all came in. We kept waiting for Dad and I even sent Gary out to see if perchance they were in the parking lot needing help.

A little after the meeting started, Daddy came hurrying in with Grandpa in his wheelchair. Apparently, even though Daddy had called the CNA's at the rest home and requested that they have Grandpa ready in his Sunday best, he wasn't dressed appropriately to participate in a priesthood blessing and so Daddy had spent time helping him get his white shirt and tie on before bringing him to our home and running downstairs to see if there was an extra suit that Grandpa could wear. Fortunately, he found one of Tim's and hurriedly put it on Grandpa and then got him back out to the van and into our meeting.

When Daddy finally sat down next to me in sacrament meeting, the sweat was just running down his face and although we didn't have time then for explanations, I knew it had been quite a circus, whatever had happened.

During the meeting both Josh and Jeanette bore their testimonies and Rick also. It was very sweet to be a part of it. I know it meant a lot to Grandpa. Following our meetings, we had dinner together.

I was released Sunday from my teaching job. I had a lot of sweet comments of appreciation from class members before the day was over and it was satisfying to feel like I was going to be missed.

Tuesday SaraKay caught Daddy's flu and she was home for the day. Yesterday she dragged around trying to keep up with her studies and attend ball practice so she could participate in the tournament today. Last night was the rehearsal for tonight's Christmas concert and today she has her tournament during school hours so I took the day off to attend the games. She was still under the weather this morning but left a little while ago for school. Mike called last night and he has been sick with a sore throat. Larsen has also been sick this past week. I know there is a lot of sickness around so I hope that all of you will do your best to stay warm, dry, and healthy.

(Afternoon) We just returned from SaraKay's tournament. They took first place. It made for a long and grueling day, especially since SaraKay is still under the weather with the flu. She jammed her thumb and was pretty beat by the time the game was over.

[Mom] We've had a sick household these past few days. Although we've all had a touch of the flu, it's been the colds and coughs that have been harder to shake. SaraKay spent most of her week feeling under the weather but carried on with basketball, school, and the orchestra concert despite not feeling good. She would come home and collapse and then get up the next day and drag around. Finally, today she is beginning to feel good again. Dad and I are still hacking, but trying to keep up with all the demands that are so much a part of the holiday.

Last night our ward choir participated in the stake choir concert. We haven't had a choir for several months and Sue Fife, Debbie Ellis and I pulled something together at the last minute so that we could be represented at the Christmas concert. Next Sunday we will perform three numbers for our ward sacrament meeting and then we'll be on hold again until the bishopric gets a director called.

On Friday night the scout professionals were treated to an evening of good food and entertainment at the Mountain River Ranch. We arrived about seven and did some mingling before being taken by horse-drawn sleigh to the dining hall. We enjoyed scrumptious prime rib and listened to some super fiddlers and vocalists. It made for a fun evening and a chance to do something different from our usual activities. This week we have the high council party and SaraKay's school concert.

As some of you are aware, I turned in my resignation last week at the Charter School. I have felt so much more overwhelmed this year with my additional responsibilities of teaching two music classes each day. I usually bring home materials to prepare my lessons for the following day and it seemed like it was occupying more time than I felt I could give. After a lot of prayer and consulting with Daddy, I decided to back away from it and free up my time for other pursuits. I know that I will miss the students and the sweet women I work with. This year the whole staff is working well together and I feel that we have improved the quality of the school tremendously over what was happening last year. I'm hoping that they will replace me with someone who can continue the music program that I started.

This Saturday we will make a quick trip to Logan to deliver gifts to the families there. Mike and Tim will arrive Sunday afternoon and we will spend Christmas Eve with Becky and Chet. On Christmas Alva Lu and Grandpa will be here and then on Friday Paul and Jenny and Steph and Linds arrive. I have been a little apprehensive about everyone who will be traveling these next few weeks, some by plane, train, and car. Becky and Chet are making a quick trip to California with the kids as a part of their Christmas, Mike is arriving Saturday night late via Amtrak, and Paul and Jenny will be flying in from Madison on Christmas Eve. Hopefully everyone will be safe and get to their destinations without delays or problems. We will miss our Midwest bunch.

[Dad] I can't believe that Sue sent out last week's letter without me, but it is a good thing she did! She mentioned my bout of gastric flu and its progression through the family to Sara Kay and then ending up with Sue on Thursday night. Besides that, I am still fighting bronchitis—it has been three months and I am sick and tired of sick and tired. Sunday was a full and rewarding day with Stake Presidency meeting, Stake Young Women Presidency meeting, our full complement of meetings, home teaching, choir practice, signing recommends, and then the Stake Choir Festival.

When I am doing interviews for recommends, sometimes when I feel prompted to and have the time—after the first three questions about their testimony I will ask something like, "Do you remember when you first felt your own testimony?" One of the people I asked that on Sunday night told of being drafted in the military and going to Boot Camp and seeing a young man

go up for mail call that he had a strong impression would play an important part in his life. Weeks later, he and this other young man were the only ones from his first company to end up at a certain duty station together. His friend happened to be born in Switzerland, the son of a German soldier killed in Russia, sponsored by an LDS family to come to America where he joined the Church, was drafted and introduced my friend to the Church. The Lord is truly involved in our lives and more intimately so than we usually credit Him with.

A very large part of my life right now is the daily contact with Dad. What sweet experiences we have had together and how I cherish those visits. It is difficult to juggle my schedule to be able to see him every day, but I try. He is always looking so good-they do take excellent care of him at the ECF. He is usually so alert and mentally there. We have shared apples, oranges, Florence's chocolates, Ensign articles, a book about the most meaningful things in life based on interviews with older people in care facilities and the like, visits with some of his friends in the facility, M & M's from Linda, letters and so on.

Let me just close with expressing my love and appreciation for those of you who remembered my birthday last week. I appreciated the calls and gifts. Love, DAD

